Crichton.

Heigham.

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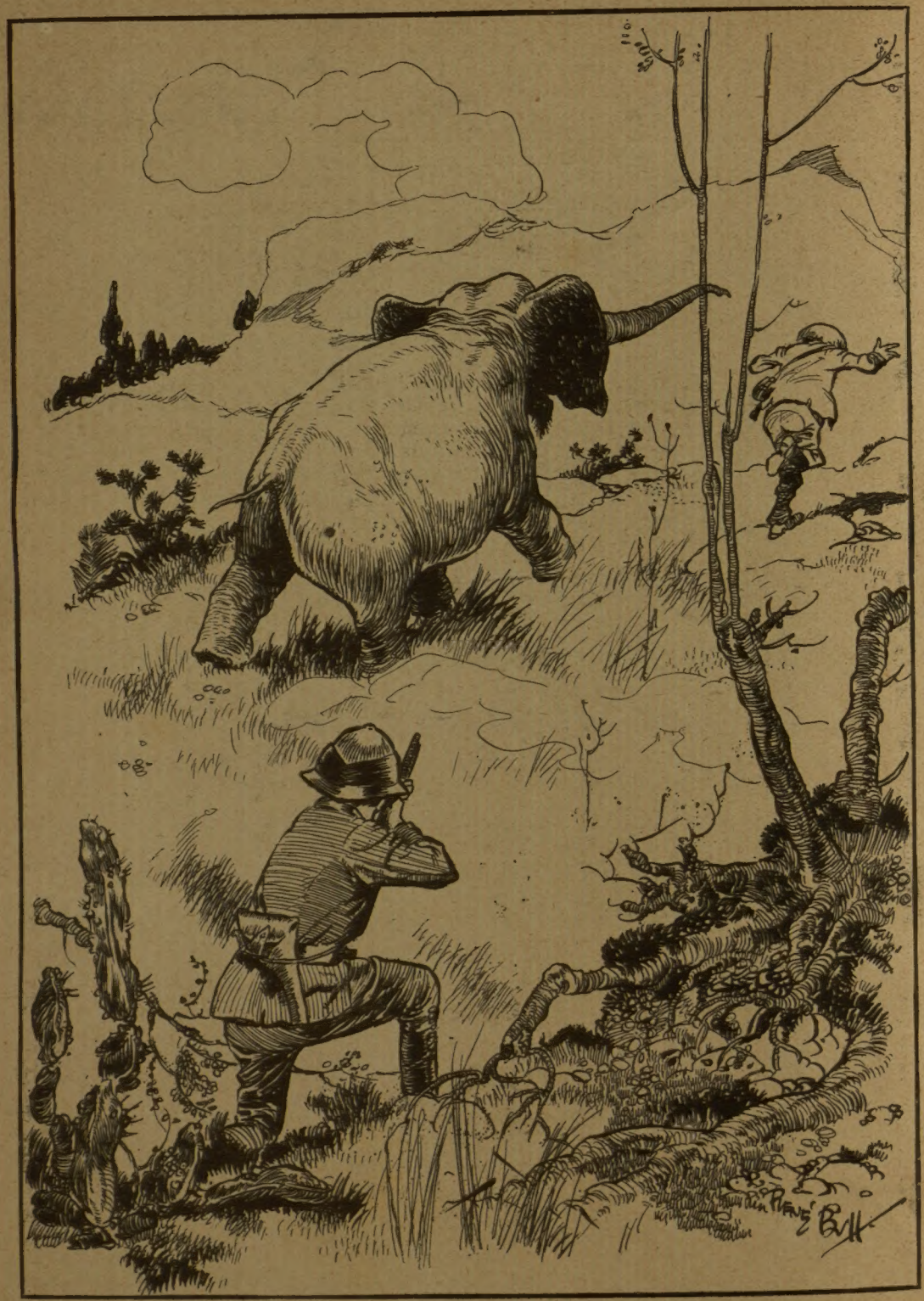
NAPOLEON IN SYRIA

General Bonaparte at St. Jean D'Acre.

From a Painting by R. Caton Woodville. (See page 670.)



The terrified Chinaman raced up the hill, the elephant, screaming shrilly, close behind him. Forrester threw up his rifle and fired, but on that tough hide the bullet had no effect.

The

Old Man of the Mountain

A Story of Mystery and Adventure in Tibet

By HERBERT STRANG

Illustrated by RENÉ BULL

CHAPTER I

OUT OF THE NIGHT

"JOLLY good curry!" said Bob Jackson, looking up over his spoon. "What do you say, Mac?"

"Ay," responded Alan Mackenzie, in a drawl. He was a man of few words.

"Your Hamid is certainly a treasure of a cook," Jackson went on. "Has he done you yet, Dick?"

"Probably, but I haven't found him out, so it doesn't matter," answered Dick Forrester, the third of the party. "It shows you!"

"What?" asked Mackenzie, who always required statements in full.

"Why, you owl, that it's sometimes better to rely on your instincts than on the advice of kind busybodies. When I came through Calcutta, everybody advised me to wait till I got up country before engaging a man, told me the casuals of the Calcutta hotels were sharks ready to prey on any griffin, and so on. But I came across Hamid, liked the look of him——"

"You've a rummy taste in looks," interposed Jackson, with a laugh. "What with his crooked nose and his one eye, he can't pass for a beauty."

"And that's a fact," said Mackenzie, solemnly.

"Well, anyway, I took him on, and that's three years ago, and I've had no reason to regret it."

"He's a champion cook, at any rate," said Jackson.

"He is that," added Mackenzie, with emphasis.

At this moment the man in question entered with the next course, and further discussion of his qualities was impossible.

The three young fellows were taking their evening meal in a tent pitched near the bank of a stream some twenty miles north of Dibrugarh on the Brahmaputra. They were almost the same age, Mackenzie, the eldest, having recently completed his twenty-first year. Three years before, they had met as strangers on the deck of the liner conveying them to Calcutta, and had struck up one of those shipboard friendships which seldom last. In their case it was otherwise. All three were learning tea-planting in Assam, and, as the "gardens" on which they were severally engaged were many miles apart, their opportunities of foregathering were not very frequent. But they met as often as they could for sport in the form of snipe-shooting, boar-hunting, and other avocations that diversify the monotony of a planter's life, and they had become good comrades, knit one to another closely by the bonds of mutual trust and knowledge.

Three months' leave was now due to each of them. Forrester intended to go home: the others had arranged to make an extended tour in Northern India, and see Delhi, Lahore, and other cities of old renown. But it happened that, a few days before they were to start, they heard that a tiger had been doing mischief in a village some thirty miles from their stations. Fired by the news, they got permission from their managers to make a dash for the scene. Elephants were out of the question. They made the journey on foot, with four coolies to carry the baggage, Forrester's bearer, Hamid Gul—the man whom he had picked up in Calcutta, and who added to his many accomplishments a considerable skill in cooking—and a veteran *shikari* named Sher Jang, whose services they had often employed in their sporting expeditions. Sher Jang, with the aid of local talent, tracked the animal to its haunt in the jungle; after a few crowded moments it fell to the white men's guns; and its skin, already stripped from the carcase by the deft *shikari*, now lay stretched on the sward near the tent.

"Excuse, sahib!" said Hamid Gul, as he passed behind his master's chair after handing round the cutlets. He had been so long accustomed to use English of a sort with globe-trotters that he seldom spoke Hindustani with his master, like the average native servant.

"What is it?" asked Forrester.

The man's reply was to dangle a four-inch centipede before his eyes.

"It had cheek to crawl up honourable back, sahib," he explained.

"Kill the beast!" said Forrester.

Hamid dropped the centipede, settled it with his heel, and moved silently out of the tent.

"I can stand mosquitoes, but centipedes make me squirm," said Forrester. "If you know any sound more horrid than the plop of a centipede falling from the roof to the floor, tell me."

"To me the drone of a mosquito is ten times worse," said Jackson. "Apparently they don't like you, but they can never have enough of me, the brutes!"

"Soft and sweet!" murmured Mackenzie.

"What's the tiger-skin worth, Dick?" asked Jackson, ignoring the Scotsman's jibe.

"I don't know; but a goodish sum, probably. A man-eater's skin is usually mangy, but old Sher says that this is in good condition. Look out, Bob!"

Jackson ducked his head, already warned by a booming noise like the hum of an aeroplane engine that a beetle had flown in at the door. They watched the insect whirling about, until it came blindly in contact with the tent pole, and fell to the ground. There it lay on its back, spinning round and round with ever-increasing uproar, until Mackenzie picked it up, and flung it out—into the face of Hamid, approaching with the dessert.

The three men soon finished their meal, and, taking their camp chairs, went out into the open. When they were seated, Hamid came up with a brass salver filled with glowing charcoal, and presented to each a pair of small silver tongs with which to lift a ruddy chip for lighting his pipe. He prided himself on keeping up old customs. Then, with a good-night salaam, he passed into the tent to clear away.

It was a glorious night. The candlelight from the open tent paled in the rays of the moon, soaring aloft in a cloudless sky. A faint breeze stirred the feathery tops of the jungle grass, and ruffled the glassy surface of the rivulet. From the distance came the piercing lugubrious notes of bull frogs; the air sang with the hum of innumerable insects; ever and anon a bat flitted past like a shadow. At one side of the tent, on an upturned tub, sat Sher Jang, the *shikari*, smoking a long pipe, and gazing solemnly into space. A few yards away the coolies squatted round their camp fire, replete from their unaccustomed meal of tiger's meat, which they had devoured in the joyous belief that it would endue them with a ferocious courage.

The white men puffed away in silence, thinking over the day's sport, dreaming, maybe, of the anticipated delights of the approaching holiday. Hamid noiselessly finished his work, and then crouched with his pipe on a mat by the tent, studiously ignoring Sher Jang, as a cat ignores the dog on the hearthrug.

Thus half an hour passed. Then Mackenzie's cutty dropped from his mouth, and he snored

"Hullo, Mac, it's time you turned in!" said Forrester, shaking him by the arm.

"Ay," said Mackenzie, sleepily. "Where's my pipe?"

"At your feet."

The Scotsman picked it up, stood erect, yawned, stretched himself, then suddenly dropped his hands to his sides.

"What's yon?" he said.

His companions sprang up. They, too, had heard a rustling in the jungle close at hand—a sound louder than the swish and scrape of the grass in the breeze. Sher Jang came up to them silently, and handed them their rifles They heard the sound again, and stood in line, peering into the thicket up-stream, their fingers on the triggers.

The rustle ceased.

"Is it a tiger?" Forrester whispered in Hindustani to the *shikari*.

"No, sahib; tigers make no noise. It may be a bear."

"Or a native?" suggested Jackson.

"No, sahib; *badmashes* might prowl at dawn, but not in the night. I think it is a bear."

The rustle recommenced, and drew nearer and nearer. The white men waited with bated breath, ready to fire the instant the beast showed itself. Hamid had not moved; he was no sportsman, and trusted the sahibs to preserve him from harm. The coolies had run behind the tent.

Moment by moment the sound grew louder. Sher Jang gazed impassively into the jungle; he was too old a hand to show any feeling; but the young planters were tingling with excitement, drew quick breaths, and itched for action. All at once the long grass parted, and in the flicker of the firelight they saw a form emerge

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Forrester.

They lowered their rifles, and stood for a moment in hesitation. Then all three hastened forward, wondering, alarmed. The form was that of a man, clothed in European style. But he was not walking erect, as men walk. He was creeping slowly, painfully, on all fours. Seeing them advancing towards him, he uttered a faint cry and tried to rise, only to fall forward with a moan. They came to him, and lifted him to his feet.

"Pull—yourself—together—man!" he murmured, brokenly. "Pull—yourself—together!"

"What is it, sir?" asked Forrester, feeling the man shiver in his sodden clothes.

"Hoots, man!" exclaimed Mackenzie, "get him to the fire. He's fair wandered."

Acting on this practical suggestion, they led the stranger to the fire. The *shikari* meanwhile remained fixedly on guard, his eyes never quitting the jungle, his ears alert for further sounds.

"A blanket, Hamid!" Forrester shouted.

The man brought a blanket from the tent, and in this they rolled the stranger, setting him as close to the fire as they dared. Mackenzie unscrewed a brandy flask, and poured a little of the liquor between his lips. He gasped and lay quite still, his eyes staring without seeing. Every now and then his body twitched convulsively.

"The fever, sahib," said Hamid.

"A bad attack, too," said Forrester. "Quick! A rubber sheet, a pillow, and my bottle of quinine."

In a few minutes the stranger had been dosed with quinine and made comfortable. As yet he was unable to talk. Enveloped in the blanket, only his face was now visible—the face of a man about thirty five, refined of feature, with thick brown beard and moustache, matted with damp and dirt. The sun-tanned cheeks were sunken, the eyes within their hollow sockets blazed with the fire of fever. They watched him anxiously, their concern for his pitiable condition mingled with curiosity. How came this man to be wandering alone and unarmed in the jungle?

"Poor body!" muttered Mackenzie. "Did you notice his hands?"

"They shook like a leaf," replied Jackson.

"Ay, but the blood!"

"Was there blood on them?"

"Ay, on the palms."

"Torn by thorns as he crawled along," said Forrester. "He saw the glow of our fire, no doubt, and staggered towards it; you remember he said, 'Pull yourself together!' He has been pulling himself together for days, by the look of him—and it came to crawling at the last! No sign of pursuit, Sher?" he asked, as the *shikari* came up.

"No, sahib, there is no sound."

"Give him another dose," said Mackenzie.

After the brandy and quinine had been poured between the sick man's lips, his eyes closed and he seemed to sleep.

"We must take turns to watch him during the night," said Forrester, "and get him to my bungalow as quickly as we can to-morrow."

"If he's not away!" said Mackenzie, gloomily. "I'm no liking the looks of him."

"We'll hope for the best. Malcolm has pulled through many bad cases. We'll dose him every hour or so. I'll take first watch; you fellows turn in. I'll call one of you in three hours."

Soon the camp slept; only Forrester remained awake. He sat beside the invalid, bending forward to catch any sign of change upon the fever-flushed countenance. He rose once to replenish the fire, and once to brush away a small beetle that was crawling on the blanket. The eerie wail of a jackal broke in presently upon the lesser sounds of the night; but that was so commonly heard in Assam that Forrester scarcely noticed it.

In an hour he repeated the dose of medicine, and started involuntarily when the sick man, opening his eyes, uttered a name.

"Beresford!"

Feeble as his voice was, there was in it a note of eagerness and relief. For a moment Forrester thought of encouraging the delusion, but it flashed upon him that the man might not have been alone after all. Was his companion lost in the jungle? Leaning forward, he said, quietly:—

"My name is not Beresford, it is Forrester."

At first the man appeared not to have understood. but after a few moments a look of dread gathered in his eyes, and he struggled to get up. Gently pressing him down, Forrester said, in slow, clear tones:—

"You are with friends. You came towards our light, you remember. Won't you lie still and collect yourself, and tell me about it? 'Pull yourself together,' you know?"

"Pull yourself together!" the man repeated, like a child.

He lay back and closed his eyes, reopening them presently and turning them upon the fire.

"A light!" he muttered, eagerly. "My last chance! Pull yourself—ah! they've got him!". He shuddered, then with a sudden lapse into partial consciousness, he went on:

"There's no time to lose. They've got him! Don't you hear? They've got him! The shutter! I came on for help. One company will do it; but hurry them, for heaven's sake! Take your hand off me, you hound!"

Then followed a bewildering jumble of Hindustani and a language of which Forrester was ignorant. Taking a cup, Forrester hastened to the stream, filled it with water, and, returning, bathed the stranger's burning brow. The raving ceased. After a brief silence the weak voice again spoke coherently, though the speaker, as the words showed, did not realise his position.

The man dangled a four-inch centipede before his eyes. "It had cheek to crawl up honourable back!" he said.

"Don't wait for me. In the hills—four days; nights are better; you won't meet men by night. But march day and night; there's no time to lose, I tell you."

"How shall we find the way?" asked Forrester, in the quiet tone he had employed before.

"I'll show you," said the man, eagerly, trying again to rise. "No, I'm dead beat," he added, falling back. "I'll follow you up. I made a jotting; you can't miss them. What are you waiting for?"

"The paper. Where is it?"

The man wriggled within the blanket, and a look of agony distorted his face as he felt his helplessness.

Forrester quickly loosed the wrappings.

"Which pocket?" he asked.

But a stream of incoherent babbling poured from the exhausted man's lips. He lay passive as Forrester felt in his breast pocket and drew forth a small leather case. Opening it, Forrester discovered a folded paper lying loose. He spread it out, and saw what at first seemed to be nothing but a smudge. But when he held the paper nearer to the firelight, he distinguished a design. It was disappointing, puzzling. A pencil line slanted from the left-hand top corner to the middle of the sheet, then branched horizontally to the right. The pencil marks had rubbed and smudged in the man's pocket, but looking at them closely, Forrester made out a few words in addition to the line. At the angle he read "Camel's Hump," at the end on the right, "Monkey Face." There was nothing more.

CHAPTER II

A COUNCIL OF WAR

FORRESTER sat musing on what he had learnt from the sick man's broken phrases and the scrap of paper. It was little enough. The stranger's companion, Beresford, had been captured,

presumably by natives, at a spot four days' march distant in the hills. His friend had come alone over at least a hundred miles of wild country to seek help. The pencil line traced his course; the names no doubt roughly described conspicuous natural features that would serve as landmarks on his return. But who were the captors? Where was the place of durance? What did he mean by "the shutter"? In what direction lay the point on the route called "Monkey Face"? Without answers to these questions it seemed to Forrester that nothing could be attempted on behalf of the prisoner.

A glance at the invalid showed that he was either asleep or fallen into a stupor. Forrester rose, and paced to and fro, half inclined to wake his friends before the time. The dismal hoot of an owl close at hand, several times repeated, jarred his nerves; by the natives the bird was suspected of possessing the power to scent out those about to die. Though scouting such superstitions, Forrester felt oppressed and uneasy, so that it was with real relief he heard, as he passed the tent, Mackenzie's voice rasp out from the interior:—

"De'il take the fowl!"

"You're awake, Mac?" he said, putting his head in.

"Who could sleep through yon soul-terrifying clamour?"

"Neither soft nor sweet," murmured Jackson. "How is he, Dick?"

"Asleep now, but he's been talking. As you're awake, get up, and I'll tell you."

Throwing rugs about them, they joined him, and all three returned to the fire. Forrester repeated the man's words, and showed them the paper.

"He's not daft, think ye, with his camels and monkeys?" said Mackenzie.

"He was sane enough when he drew this diagram," Forrester replied.

They examined it in turn.

"I say, here's a word you've missed," said Jackson, suddenly. "It's very faint, and badly smudged. I can hardly make it out, but it's 'Falls,' isn't it?"

They scrutinised the paper eagerly in the firelight.

"You're right," said Forrester. "That's his starting point, by the look of it: some waterfall or other."

The stranger's pocket-book was lying on the ground where Forrester had placed it after removing the paper. Mackenzie picked it up.

"Don't you think we might?" he asked.

"It's the only way," said Jackson. "Find out who he is, and make inquiries about him as soon as we get back."

Mackenzie opened the case. From one of its pockets he drew forth a roll of rouble notes, from another a couple of letters addressed to Captain Redfern at Peshawar, and finally a small note-book.

"There's his name," said Forrester. "The note-book may help us."

He found, however, on opening this, that the leaves contained nothing but jottings of words and phrases in unfamiliar tongues, with their English equivalents. There was no clue to his destination or the object of his journey, no mention of his companion.

"We're not much forarder," said Forrester. "The only thing to do is to get home as quickly as possible to-morrow, and wire through to Sadiya or Calcutta. Somebody will know something about him."

They talked for a few minutes longer; then Forrester and Jackson returned to the tent, leaving Mackenzie to take his spell of watching.

The camp was astir early. While the coolies were packing up, and Hamid was preparing breakfast, Forrester sent Sher Jang to the village half a mile away to enlist carriers for the sick man. In an hour the *shikari* returned with four lithe, well-developed young Mishmis, whose only clothing was a loin-cloth of bark and strips of bamboo coiled about their arms and legs. The villagers' gratitude for the destruction of the man-eater disposed them to undertake any service for their deliverers, especially when that service was to be rewarded with pay.

After breakfast, a litter was quickly constructed of a blanket and two bamboo stalks cut from the border of the stream. On this they placed Captain Redfern; he was still unconscious, and neither spoke nor stirred; and by eight o'clock the caravan was in movement.

Their way led them through the village. Here they waited to receive the thanks of the head-man, who presented them with a number of fowls in token of his gratitude. A crowd of men gathered around the litter, chattering excitedly in sing-song tones. Sher Jang presently drew Forrester aside.

"They talk of prisoners, sahib," he said in a whisper. "There are two strangers; may one of them be the captain sahib's friend?"

"Ask the head-man," said Forrester, eagerly.

The *shikari's* question seemed to cause the head-man some embarrassment. At first he

denied that there was any truth in his young men's gossip, but on Sher Jang's insisting, with threats which Forrester would hardly have countenanced, he confessed that two strangers had indeed been brought into the village the night before. A party of the villagers had been away on an excursion some fifteen miles across the Brahmaputra. (He did not disclose the object of the expedition, but the *shikari* guessed that it was not unconnected with head hunting.) They were marching through the jungle when suddenly they heard a rustle and hid themselves. Two men came in sight, not naked Abors, as they had expected to see, but strangers, clothed. They had captured them without difficulty, for the men bore no weapons and one of them had lost his right arm, and brought them back to the village.

"Where are they?" asked Forrester, when Sher Jang repeated this story to him.

"In the *moshup*," the head-man replied, pointing to a spacious building in the heart of the village. It was built on piles, the walls and the sloping roof made of plantain leaves laid one upon another like the tiles of a European house. There the affairs of the community were discussed by day, and the unmarried men slept at night.

"Let me see them," said Forrester, hoping that by some strange coincidence Captain Redfern's friend, having escaped from captivity, had wandered in much the same direction.

The head-man besought the sahib not to be angry with him. The presence of the strangers was a trouble to him, for he did not know what to do with them. He could not speak their speech, and he was afraid. His young men ought not to have laid hands on men who were clothed. Forrester cut short his apologies, promising that he should suffer no harm; whereupon the head-man sent a messenger to the building aforesaid, to bring forth the prisoners.

The Englishmen awaited their coming with mingled hope and anxiety. By and by two figures emerged from the building.

"Chinamen, by Jinks!" Jackson ejaculated.

Disappointed at the dashing of their hopes, the three were no longer much interested in the Mishmis' prisoners, through whom their journey was being delayed. But they could not help remarking a certain strangeness in the Chinamen's manner of approach. They did not hasten across the open space with the eager gait of men to whom had come sudden deliverance from a terrible fate (for there was not much doubt that the villagers would ultimately have solved their dilemma by adding the Chinamen's heads to their collection). After leaving the *moshup*, and perceiving the unmistakable forms of Englishmen in the distance, the two men halted and appeared to consult together. Then they advanced slowly, one before the other, in the manner of a shepherd driving a solitary sheep.

The first comer was a young man, well grown, but curiously slack in his gait and bearing. His head hung forward a little; his arms drooped limply at his sides; and in his eyes, as he drew nearer, the Englishmen discerned a languorous and sleepy expression. The second man presented a striking contrast. His age was between fifty and sixty, but he was upright as a dart; and his features, his eyes, his whole mien bespoke energy and determination. The right sleeve of his coat was empty, and lay pinned across his breast.

Escorted by a noisy crowd of the villagers, the Chinamen came up to the Englishmen, and bowed in salutation. Then, before Forrester could utter a word, the younger man began to speak in a breathless, jumpy fashion, strangely unlike the stolidity which is usually associated with the Chinese.

"We ask your assistance, gentlemen," he said in good English; only his reedy tone, the usual difficulty with the letter "r," and a certain formality of phrase proclaimed him a Chinaman. "Being accused of sedition we were on our way from Yunan to Tibet with a small caravan; but a week ago we were pursued by Government troops, and with difficulty escaped, leaving our men and stores behind us."

This was uttered rapidly, as if he were repeating a lesson. At the end of the sentence he glanced timidly at the elder man, who had stood the while gazing unswervingly upon his companion. In his eyes there was a hard, metallic glitter, under which the younger man appeared to droop. Turning again to the Englishmen he went on:—

"Driven from our course by the presence of regular troops near the frontier, we diverged to the south-west towards the borders of Assam. But when we were making our way north-west again towards Tibet, we fell into the hands of these people, and we thank you very much for rescuing us from our terrible plight."

"That's all right," said Forrester, with the Englishman's usual anxiety to avoid any display of feeling. "Does your friend speak English?"

"No," returned the man with a momentary energy. "I myself——"

He broke off suddenly, with a look of

apprehension at his companion, who had not spoken, but whose eyes had never left the young man's face. Hurriedly he went on :—

"These people searched us, but did not find the little gold we carry, and the bundle of notes they found have no value for them, though they have not returned them to us. There is plenty of money to pay our way if we are assured of safety, and we ask to be allowed to accompany you until we can resume our journey."

"By all means," said Forrester. "I will get your notes back. I suggest that you make a small present to the head-man, and he will no doubt let you come with us without any bother."

A brief conversation ensued between Forrester and the head-man, through Sher Jang. The notes were surrendered; a few coins were given to the Mishmi; the Chinamen attached themselves to the Englishmen's party, and the march was resumed.

"He talks fine," said Mackenzie to Forrester, "but there's something fishy about yon Chinkies."

"The older man had told the other not to give too much away, I think," said Forrester. "But they needn't be afraid of us. Political refuges are safe with Englishmen."

"Man, maybe they're murderers," said Mackenzie.

"You had better look out then," replied Forrester, with a laugh.

"Anyway, there's a hang-dog look about the youngster," said Jackson. "He's like a puppy afraid of a whipping."

More than once during the journey they tried to converse with the young Chinaman, but failed to draw more than a word or two from him. The elder man kept close to his side, and the Englishmen, finding that their well-meant remarks tended only to increase the young man's painful nervousness, gave up the attempt and left the Chinamen to themselves.

It was drawing towards sunset when they reached the plantation on which Forrester was employed. The long march through the hot and humid air had tired them all, and the condition of the sick man had become alarming. With the planter's traditional hospitality, the manager, Mr. Paterson, at once arranged to receive the captain in the bungalow he shared with Forrester, and offered to accommodate the Chinamen for the night in one of his godowns. At the instance of the elder man the younger politely, but with evident reluctance, declined this offer, preferring to push on to Dibrugarh, only a few miles away. The Englishmen did not press them; they were anxious to have as soon as possible the opinion of Dr Malcolm, the medical officer of the gardens, on the invalid's chances of recovery.

As they approached the man tried to rise, uttered a faint cry, then fell forward with a groan.

"Eh, man, it's a verra bad case," said the bluff Scots surgeon after making his examination. "Malaria is bad enough, as ye know, but I would not say but this is jungle

fever. However, never say die; I'll do what I can."

Early next morning Forrester rode over to Dibrugarh, and telegraphed to a military friend of Mr. Paterson's in Calcutta, asking if anything was known of Captain Redfern. The manager had advised this course in preference to communicating with officials, as likely to avoid red tape and save time. In a few hours the answer came:—

Redfern, Captain Bengal Fusiliers, on furlough exploring buried cities Chinese Turkestan with Beresford, archæologist.

Forrester was not very strong in geography, but he knew that Chinese Turkestan must be at least a thousand miles from Dibrugarh. What had brought the explorers so far from the scene of their labours? The pressing question, however, was the whereabouts of Beresford. Without loss of time Forrester took the first train for Sadiya, the frontier village, where resided the Political Officer whose duty was to keep an eye on the hill tribes.

"Your man is where he had no business to be," said that gentleman when he had heard Forrester's scanty story. "He has been collared, I should think, by the hillmen somewhere south of Tibet—quite beyond my jurisdiction."

"Do you know anything of a waterfall a hundred miles or so north?" asked Forrester.

"There are falls in plenty, no doubt," was the reply; "but the country on the right bank of the Brahmaputra up there is practically unexplored. Part of the course of the Brahmaputra itself is unknown."

"Before he became delirious Redfern talked of sending up a column to rescue his friend."

"My dear fellow, he was talking through his hat. It's entirely out of the question. The Government won't run the risk of provoking a general rising of the hillmen whenever a roving explorer has come to grief in a district where he has no earthly right to be. It would mean one of those little frontier wars that cost no end of money and set the Labour members barking."

"But surely something ought to be done—can be done for an Englishman," Forrester persisted.

"I'll communicate with headquarters and let you know the result; but I promise you it's no good. The country is a sort of no man's land. Representations at Lhasa and at Pekin would be equally useless; China and Tibet would both wash their hands of the matter. Besides, Government wheels move slowly the man would be done for before any move could be made; he may be done for already. I'm sorry for him, but he has only himself to blame."

Forrester went away very indignant at what he regarded as official callousness, yet recognising the soundness of the Political Officer's contention. He remembered the Abor expedition, in which a large military force had been engaged for six months in making its way through the jungle to exact retribution for the murder of two Englishmen. Remembering, too, the uncertainty of Beresford's whereabouts, he was forced to admit that the Government might reasonably hesitate to commit themselves to an enterprise of which the end could not be foreseen.

When he returned to the plantation, and told his friends the results of his journey, Jackson, who was excitable and quick-tempered, stamped up and down the room, abusing Governments and Political Officers and mankind generally. Mackenzie, on the other hand, sat placidly smoking his pipe, silent and thoughtful. In the course of a few minutes, when Jackson had blown off steam, the Scotsman said quietly:—

"Now ye've done blethering, Bob, listen to me. We'll do it ourselves."

"What?"

"Ay!"

"What do you mean, Mac?" asked Forrester.

"I'm telling you. A score or two of the Assam Light Horse——"

"Oh, rats!" cried Jackson, impatiently. "If the Government won't undertake it, d'you suppose they'll let a lot of amateurs go careering about? They'd expect to have to send a Field Force to bring us off. It's absurd."

"Don't blow my head off. I've another proposition. I'm not particular about my leave. Let the three of us see what we can do."

"D'you mean it, Mac?" cried Forrester.

"Ay!"

CHAPTER III

THE REFUGEES

THE credit of the arrangements made during the next two days must be divided between Mackenzie and Sher Jang. The former showed a capacity for organisation which his friends had not suspected.

"Just ye listen to me," he said, when they were discussing the proposal he had sprung upon them. "If I tell ye nothing, ye'll no have to tell fibs, d'ye ken? The least wee bit

suspicion, and our leave will be stopped. All ye need to know is that before we start for our holiday in earnest we're going on a private hunting expedition, which will be perfectly true. Sher Jang and I between us will make things ready."

"That's the longest speech I've ever heard from your lips, Mac," said Forrester with a laugh.

"Maybe," Mackenzie replied.

He was not the man to let grass grow under his feet. Within an hour Sher Jang set off to interview certain Nagas of his acquaintance —active forest-bred natives who had served from time to time as beaters in hunting expeditions, and were to be depended on for nerve and steadiness. The *shikari's* mission was to engage half a dozen as carriers for such stores as it would be necessary to take. They would be armed in case of difficulties with the natives they might encounter on the way, though Mackenzie hoped that no hostility would be aroused by the passage of what was ostensibly a hunting party.

Meanwhile, Mackenzie himself sought out in Dibrugarh a local native contractor, whom he engaged to deliver a carefully calculated quantity of food within two days at a village about twelve miles north of the Brahmaputra. He went about among his acquaintances, trying discreetly to pick up any information they might possess about the country northward; but none of them had travelled more than a score of miles in that direction, so that his cautious inquiries had little result. As Captain Redfern was still in the delirium of fever, it became clear that the leaders of the expedition would have to rely on themselves to discover the place of Beresford's captivity. They anticipated little difficulty in locating the spots Redfern had marked as "Camel's Hump" and "Monkey Face," because in the country through which they were going the mountains rose to a height of many thousands of feet, and eminences so distinctive as to invite special names would no doubt be conspicuous at a very great distance.

On the appointed day the three young fellows set off with Sher Jang and Hamid Gul. Their departure awakened no suspicion, but only a mild envy among those whose holidays were still to come. Arriving at the rendezvous, they found the half-dozen Nagas awaiting them, and the Assamese contractor with the supplies. On entering the village, Jackson turned round with a start.

"What's up, Bob?" Forrester asked, noticing a strange look of bewilderment in his friend's eyes.

"Nothing. I don't know," Jackson replied, slowly. "I had the rummiest feeling—just as if someone were calling me."

Forrester laughed.

"Nerves, old chap," he said.

They went on together, thinking no more of the matter. The Nagas soon shouldered their loads, which consisted of a light camp equipment and a quantity of food. Forrester was about to give the order to start when there came from a hut on the far side of the village the two Chinamen with whom they were already acquainted, followed by two Nagas carrying packages. The men approached in the same order as on the occasion of their first meeting, and the younger man looked more miserable than ever. Coming up to the Englishmen, he addressed them haltingly, in the manner of one performing a distasteful duty against his will.

"I make humble excuses, gentlemen," he said, "but I beg a favour. Learning that you were travelling in this direction, we ask that you will permit us to accompany you and enjoy the benefit of your protection until our ways part."

"I wish to goodness the fellow wouldn't look as if he were going to snivel," Jackson whispered to Mackenzie.

"All right; don't apologise," said Forrester. "We're in rather a hurry; I hope we shan't walk you off your legs."

The Chinaman thanked him, and fell back with his one-armed friend, whose eyes had been bent steadily upon his face. Mackenzie went up to the Assamese contractor.

"Ye blethering idiot!" he said. "Didn't I tell you to hold your tongue?"

The Assamese cringed and rubbed his hands together deprecatingly. He explained that the Chinese gentlemen had lodged in his house, and he had only mentioned casually that he was providing stores for a hunting party. It was an honour he much appreciated.

"Eh! Get out!" Mackenzie exclaimed in disgust. "A man that cannot hold his tongue is a very pitiful body. We must get away at once," he added, addressing his friends. "If this wretched creature has been talking, the authorities have maybe got wind of it, and they'll be sending after us."

To avoid the risk of being stopped, they wasted not a minute. The company formed up in marching order and set off. Forrester and Mackenzie led the way with Sher Jang; the

Nagas followed: then Hamid Gul and the Chinamen with their retainers, Jackson bringing up the rear. The Nagas, sturdy little fellows about five feet high, brown of skin, with bright eyes tinged with smoke, stepped out cheerfully under their loads. These were carried in conical-shaped baskets slung from their shoulders, and kept in position by a band of plaited cane round the forehead.

The way led through open grass land amid trailing creepers and patches of bog. Insects buzzed around, darting in to sting, and leeches clung to the clothes of the white men and the bare bodies of the natives, and could only be dislodged by the lighted tip of a cigarette. Streams had to be forded, through beds of rushes and bamboo rising to a height of 8ft. or 9ft. The air was hot and moist, and the white men, lightly clad though they were, were soon dripping with perspiration; but they held gamely on until near mid-day, when they took a light meal, resting afterwards for a couple of hours.

During the afternoon, Mackenzie noticed that the Chinamen had pushed forward beyond their allotted position, and, outstripping the Nagas, had closed up within a few yards of the leaders.

"Get back to your place," he said.

The men at once fell back, and for the rest of the day the order was unbroken.

"You spoke rather sharply, Mac," said Forrester.

"Ay. The beggars wanted to hear our talk."

"D'you think so? They carry no loads, and, of course, walk faster than the Nagas."

"That's true, but I don't trust 'em."

"They only want company, I fancy. The poor wretches won't feel safe until they reach Tibet. I've read of Chinese torture, and if they're political refugees they'll be in mortal terror of falling into the hands of their enemies."

"Maybe," Mackenzie replied. "They've a long road to go."

"Look here, you're suspicious," said Forrester. "What's in your mind?"

"Nothing in particular. But I don't like 'em too near."

Towards nightfall they encamped in a fairly open space, and Mackenzie assigned to the Chinamen a position well out of hearing.

On the following day they found marching more difficult. The country rose gradually, presenting many sharp ascents and declivities, jungle alternating with stretches of bare stony ground. As they pursued their toilsome way they realised the stupendous exertions that Captain Redfern must have made in travelling alone, unarmed, and without provisions except such edible plants as he could find in this trackless country. They met no men; Sher Jang turned aside whenever he saw human tracks. But they sighted elephants, wild boars, and other game which appealed to their sporting instincts. They would not delay, however, to try their skill: on the way back, perhaps, when their errand was completed, they might secure trophies of the chase.

Late in the afternoon of the second day they made their camp on a rocky hillside within a few hundred yards of a small mountain stream, which swirled its impetuous way between grassy banks. One of the Nagas descended the slope to fetch water for cooking; the white men, weary with the day's march, were reclining near their tent, smoking in silence.

They were suddenly disturbed by a shout from below, an agonised cry for help. It was followed by a shrill sound which the white men had never heard before, but which caused the *shikari* to spring to his feet in excitement.

"Elephant, sahib!" he cried.

Almost at the same moment the Naga, his eyes distended with terror, broke out of the long grass at the edge of the stream, and ran up the slope towards the camp. A few yards behind him came a huge elephant, its trunk uplifted, filling the air with its squeals of rage.

The white men seized their guns. But between them and the elephant were the Nagas, who, on the first alarm, rushed helter-skelter towards the tent. It was impossible to fire without hitting them. Heedless of the white men's shouts, they did not turn aside and so allow a clear space for shooting.

"We must cut and run," cried Forrester.

The three turned among the terrified natives, and the whole party scattered in all directions up the hill. The elephant charged on, crashed into the tent and levelled it with the ground, and rushed with infuriated bellowings in pursuit of the fugitives.

In the haste and excitement of the moment, Forrester had taken no heed of the rest of the party. The appearance of the monstrous beast was so sudden and unexpected, the fury of its thunderous onset so alarming, that dismay and confusion might have been forgiven to the most experienced of hunters. But he became aware that in the dispersion of the party, the young Chinaman, whether by accident or design, was within a few feet of him, making, like himself, for the shelter of a belt of trees

a little above them. They entered it almost side by side, and Forrester, gathering his wits, began to dodge in and out among the trees, knowing that the elephant would be at a great disadvantage in following him by reason of its unwieldy bulk.

For a few moments he was too much preoccupied to think of the Chinaman. But the thuds of the great hoofs growing fainter, he stood still and looked to see what had become of the young man. To his horror he saw that the youth had run straight through the copse to a clear rocky space beyond, where the elephant, with a speed which its lumbering frame little promised, was rapidly overtaking him. Divided between alarm for the Chinaman's safety and annoyance at his stupidity, Forrester sprinted through the copse, hoping at least to divert the beast and give the fugitive a chance.

The Chinaman's luck was against him. Ignorant of the fact that elephants have difficulty in running obliquely up a slope, he was racing straight up hill, the animal, screaming shrilly, only a dozen yards behind. Forrester perceived that in a very few moments the hapless youth must inevitably be run down and trampled to death unless the elephant were checked at once. He stopped short, threw up his rifle and fired. The bullet had as little effect on the tough hide as a pea might have had. Neither the report nor the impact caused the elephant to swerve.

"Behind the ear!" Forrester said to himself, as he lifted the rifle for a second shot, and steadied himself to take a careful aim. He fired, and could scarcely believe his eyes when the huge creature stumbled forward, recovered itself, then rolled over sideways and lay stretched upon the ground.

Breathless, quivering from his exertions, Forrester stood gazing upon the inert lump. He was barely conscious of the shouts of his party beyond the copse and higher up the hill. But in a moment he was roused from his brief abstraction. The young Chinaman, seeing that there was nothing more to fear, had hastened back. He came eagerly up to his rescuer, and began to speak in a low, agitated voice.

"Sir—sir," he gulped, trying to regain his breath; and Forrester was amazed at the change that had come over him. Gone was the languid droop, the timid mien, the furtive cringing expression of the eye. The lad stood erect; his eyes shone; words flowed from his lips, not in the sing-song of one repeating a lesson, but with the modulations of spontaneous energy and a full heart.

"Sir, sir," he said, "twice you have saved my life. Will you not help me again? Save me from I know not what. I am not what I seem, the servant of that horrible man. We are not refugees. My father is a mandarin, the governor of Szechuan; I am his eldest son. Six months ago that man, Wen Shih, entered my father's service; he was a diligent servant, and was trusted by all. He gained my confidence; we were much together. One day he bade me come with him a journey, and I came, and I cannot get away. Where we go I know not, but I fear, I fear! He holds me, he commands me, he—he is calling me!"

At these last words his tone fell to a murmur, his jaw dropped, and a look of terror came into his eyes.

"Go on; tell me more," said Forrester, taking the Chinaman by the arm.

"He is calling me," the youth murmured again, though his elder companion was not within sight, nor could his voice be heard. He turned slowly about, and with head hung forward and arms outstretched before him, in the attitude of a man groping in the dark, he staggered rather than walked back towards the camp.

CHAPTER IV

MORE MYSTERY

FORRESTER'S attention was diverted from the Chinaman by the appearance of his friends, whom the sound of his lucky shot had drawn through the copse.

"By Jinks!" Jackson cried as they came up, "you killed him!"

"I never made such a fluke in my life," Forrester replied. "Come and have a look at him."

They found that the bullet, entering behind the ear, had passed clean through the animal's brain.

"You *must* take his tusks," Jackson went on. "It would be simply idiotic not to carry home the trophies of your first elephant. That's a job for Sher Jang."

"Where is he?" Forrester asked.

"Ay, where?" Mackenzie echoed. "He's a queer sort of *shikari* to run from elephant."

"We can't fling a stone at him over that," Forrester remarked, with a laugh. "Let's get back to camp, and send him up. I dare say the men would relish elephant meat for supper."

As they turned towards the camp, the

Chinaman's strange words recurred to Forrester's mind.

"I say, you fellows, there *is* something mighty queer about those Chinamen," he said. "The youngster was running with me, and after I had shot the elephant he began to tell me things—not in what Bob calls his snivelling style; he seemed a new man altogether. He said they're not political refugees at all."

"Eh! I thought as much," Mackenzie put in. "They're criminals."

"I don't know. He said the elder man was a servant in his father's house, and his father is a mandarin, governor of some place or other. The servant has some sort of a hold over the fellow. But just as he was getting to the most interesting part of his story, he suddenly broke off, whispered that the man was calling him, and looked as terrified as if he'd seen a ghost. I asked him to go on, but he turned away, stretched out his hands like that," he illustrated the gesture, "and began to stumble back like a blind man. Didn't you see him as you came through the copse?"

"I caught sight of him, but didn't notice him particularly," said Jackson. "What do you make of it? Is he cracked?"

"Upon my word I should have thought so, only he spoke sensibly enough. I'll see if I can get more out of him presently. The other man doesn't know English, so the young one can tell us anything he likes without his being any the wiser."

On emerging from the copse they saw that the Nagas had collected in a group up the hill, evidently awaiting assurance that all danger was past. Hamid Gul was helping Sher Jang to re-erect the flattened tent. Near by, the elder Chinaman sat cross-legged on a rock, and the younger stood before him in the attitude of a suppliant.

As the three men approached the tent, Sher Jang came to them.

"I have shot the elephant," Forrester said to him. "Go up presently and cut him up. We'll keep the tusks. Why didn't you come with me?"

"I watched, sahib," the man replied.

"But watching is not work for a *shikari*."

"Sometimes it is, sahib. Why did not the stranger yonder run with the rest?"

"What do you mean?"

"He sat on the rock where he sits now, sahib. The elephant passed within a few feet of him, but he did not move. He sat there, and his eyes were fixed like glass. I thought: why is he so still, like a Buddha in stone? And I stayed to watch him; it seemed good to me, sahib."

"And what did you see?"

"No more than I have said, sahib, except that presently the young stranger came back like a blind beggar feeling his way through the bazar. Then the elder man smiled, and his smile was like the grin of a tiger. That is all, sahib."

"Well, get the tent up. Is the pole broken?"

"We have spliced it with rope, sahib. That simpleton," indicating Hamid, "wrung his hands and declared the pole useless, but I showed him the way."

The three men went on towards the Chinamen. At their approach the elder man rapped out a few words in a stern and peremptory tone to his companion, then rose to his feet with a respectful salutation to the white men. Forrester acknowledged it, and, turning at once to the younger man, asked him to continue the story he had so abruptly broken off. A pitiful look of distress came into the lad's eyes; his lips moved, but not a sound issued from them.

"Come, there's nothing to be afraid of," Forrester urged. "You may speak quite freely."

"Forget what I said, sir," the lad muttered. "It was false. I beg you think no evil of my kind friend."

His voice hardly rose above a whisper; every word seemed to be wrung from him.

"But surely there is something in it," Forrester persisted. "Was your friend a servant in your father's house? You did not invent that?"

The lad cast a look at his companion that might have been interpreted as terror or anxiety. The elder man did not return the glance, but stood beside him with a mien suggesting patient forbearance or even absence of mind.

"I do not know what I said," the young man replied slowly, like one talking in his sleep. "I was excited after the great peril I had escaped, my mind was troubled, and my tongue spoke foolishness. Pardon me, I pray you."

Seeing that nothing more was to be got out of the lad, Forrester turned away with his companions.

"There's some mystery here," he said, when they were out of earshot. "What's the matter, Bob?" he asked, noticing a strange look in Jackson's face.

"I don't know: I feel as if this were all a

dream—a queer sort of fuzzy feeling in my head."

"I feel puzzled enough," said Forrester. "Why should the fellow make out that he was telling lies? It looks as if he's mortally afraid of the other man, but I can't make it out, for the chap doesn't know English, and wouldn't understand, whatever was said. What do you say, Mac?"

"There's no call to say anything," Mackenzie replied.

"There's the canny Scot," Forrester said with a laugh. "You'll think all the more, I suppose."

"I'm thinking they're worth watching," was Mackenzie's answer.

Next morning a slight change was made in the order of the march. Mackenzie asked Jackson to go ahead with Forrester, while he brought up the rear.

"I don't mind, but what's your reason?" Jackson asked.

"I just wish to contemplate the Chinkies from the rear," was the reply.

Whatever the result of his examination was, Mackenzie said nothing about it.

Towards mid-day the snow-clad peaks of a mountain range opened up ahead of the party; although in the clear atmosphere they seemed to be only a few miles distant, the nearest was probably fifty miles away. The intervening country was a series of undulations, bare stretches of rocks, here and there deeply fissured, alternating with thickly wooded valleys and dense jungle. Ever since they left Dibrugarh the party had been steadily climbing, and the higher they rose, the less their progress was impeded by undergrowth; and the lower temperature made their exertions less fatiguing. But the white men were more and more impressed with the courage and endurance which Captain Redfern had shown in traversing this wild region.

They kept a keen look-out for hills answering to the names he had given them, for they had no other landmarks by which to direct their course. It was impossible to believe that they were peaks of the snowy range so far ahead: four days would not have sufficed for the covering of so immense a distance. Forrester was already feeling very doubtful of the possibility of distinguishing the hills, when Sher Jang suddenly pointed to the eastern end of a smaller range that crossed the prospect perhaps twenty miles away. It was a precipice falling away abruptly to the general level from a height of two or three thousand feet, and the contours of the scarp bore a strong resemblance to a monkey's face. Forrester swept his eyes along the range from east to west, and gave a cry of delight when he distinguished at the western end a rounded eminence shaped like the hump of a camel.

"We're on the right track," he said. "We shall have to round that range, then cut away northward to find the falls. Probably they won't be so easy to discover."

"It will be to-morrow night before we reach the Camel's Hump," said Jackson. "The falls can't be more than a day's march farther, or Redfern couldn't possibly have done it in four days."

"We go slower than he did, owing to our baggage. If we only came across some natives, we might ask them the way, but the whole country seems to be uninhabited."

When they halted to form camp, Mackenzie said:—

"Just now I caught the young Chinky talking to Hamid Gul, and I stopped it. Hamid told me the fellow asked where we were going, and why we didn't look for game. I got up to them in time to prevent the answer."

"They were very natural questions," said Forrester. "We are supposed to be a hunting party."

"Ay, and the Chinkies are supposed to be political refugees, but I have my doubts. I would like well to see the back of them. Have you had any return of that fuzzy feeling, Bob?"

"No. You haven't had it?"

"Not I. What about you, Dick?"

"D'you think it's catching?" Forrester asked with a laugh. "My head's perfectly clear, thanks."

But a couple of hours later, when all three were sitting smoking at the door of the tent, Forrester suddenly stood up, looked round him with an air of perplexity, then took a step in the direction of the spot where the Chinamen were reclining. Mackenzie grasped his coat, and pulled him back into his seat.

"What are ye about, man?" he asked.

For a moment Forrester was silent, then he said:—

"It's very queer. I felt as if I must walk over there, goodness knows what for. The feeling has gone now. What's wrong with me?"

"Malaria, as like as not," said Mackenzie. "Here, take a stiff dose of quinine. We don't want an invalid on our hands."

Forrester had no return of his strange vertigo, if such it were, and after supper

he laughed at himself for his momentary weakness.

By the afternoon of the next day they had worked round the Camel's Hump, and, turning northwards, saw stretched out before them a tract of dense scrub, beyond which in the far distance towered the peaks of the snowy range. They decided to continue their march until sunset, hoping that somewhere amid the scrub a suitable camping place would offer itself. So difficult was the passage now, that the party became more split up than had hitherto been the case; but there was no danger of anyone straying, since the order had been given that those behind should not turn aside from the tracks of those who had preceded them.

In course of time Sher Jang reached a fairly open space, and a halt was called. The Nagas straggled in, Hamid Gul followed them, and Mackenzie appeared last of all. For a few moments his companions were too much occupied to notice a diminution of their party, but presently Forrester, after a look around, cried:—

"Where are the Chinkies, Mac?"

"Aren't they here?" Mackenzie asked in return.

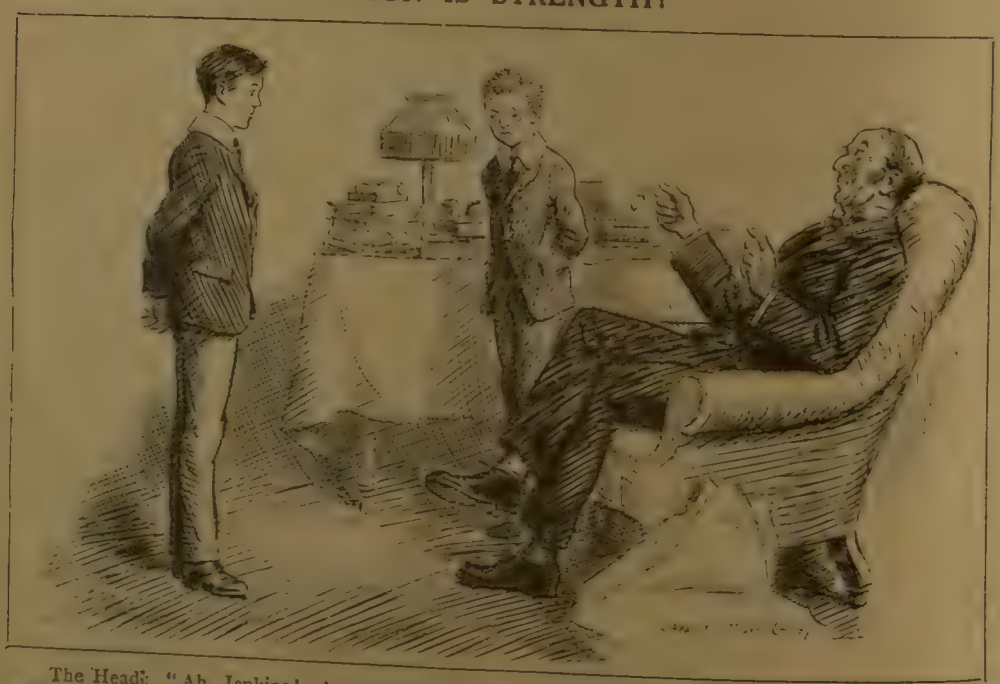
"You ought to know—you were contemplating their backs," Jackson remarked.

There was no sign of them. Forrester called up their Naga carriers, and Sher Jang questioned them. The men could give no information. Once or twice they had lost sight of the Chinamen as the scrub hid them from view. They had thought nothing of that.

The three white men looked at each other in amazement. What had become of the mandarin's son and his silent companion, Wen Shih?

(Another long instalment of this fine story next month.)

UNION IS STRENGTH!



The Head: "Ah, Jenkins! As your friend Jackson has left, I have decided that you shall share your study in the future with this—ahem!—new-comer, Cyril Smithers. You excel in games, and Smithers here is devoted to science, chemistry, and, in short, learning of all kinds, so that I think your partnership will be productive of much good to you both."

First Principles of Cricket

By E. H. D. SEWELL

With Illustrations by "Rip"

I SUPPOSE that hidden away in some odd corners there are still a few worthy people who are of opinion that anyone with a fairly good eye and a healthy body can play cricket successfully. But I hope that none of my young readers of THE CAPTAIN will ever permit such heresy to obtain a hold upon them. For, if so, then they will have to look elsewhere than to the cricket field for success, and the enjoyment consequent thereon. There was never a really first-class exponent of any branch of this altogether delightful game who acquired his position without sheer hard work. Some, like K. S. Ranjitsinhji, A. C. MacLaren, F. S. Jackson, R. E. Foster, V. Trumper, C. Hill, and others of that exceptional class, have a born genius for the pastime, but they, too, have *practised*, and *practised*, and *practised again* to develop their game. Practised, too, in a way that is growing more and more rare in our public schools, if half I see and hear be true. It is to the schools the game looks for its future, and if they fail us, what then? Therefore I must, in beginning this series of articles in THE CAPTAIN, impress upon all members of school elevens, from the captain down to the youngest youngster in the junior teams, the necessity of untiring practice, not only in batting, but in fielding and bowling.

This depends more upon *keenness*, real and unassumed, than upon anything else.

Once that is there, the rest follows as surely as a licking a bit of cheek.

Keenness is not necessarily inborn in us. It can be acquired by seeing, reading, playing, and *thinking cricket*, until the right kind of keenness becomes part of a boy's nature, and he develops gradually into that best and brightest specimen of British manhood, a thorough cricketer. To become a thorough cricketer ought to be the aim of every boy calling himself a Briton, and if in penning the following observations upon First Principles I succeed in helping half a dozen youngsters to achieve that goal, that result will in itself justify these papers.

As a general rule far too much importance is attached to batting and the art of batsmanship. If I were coach at any public school I should insist on all players doing their share of bowling, and, if anything, more than their share of fielding. Though it is perfectly true that the really first-class bowler is born and not made, there is many a boy in every school who can bowl well enough to be made, by sheer practice and nothing else, that most useful member of any eleven, a change bowler who, when put on to bowl to give the regular bowlers a rest, will either get a couple of wickets or will keep down the runs. But custom ordains so often that after Jones and Brown, the two school bowlers, have swaggered through ten minutes

The yorker is not bowled anything like so often as it ought to be.

with the ball at the nets, the rest of the bowling shall devolve on the pro. and anyone else who cares to go through some kind of bowling antics, that in a general way no real regular change bowling is developed.

Or the other extreme is reached, and the best bowlers are *allowed to* "bowl themselves to death" at the nets because, forsooth, Robertson, Thompson, and Williamson, the three chief school batsmen, find they get no practice from "that stuff of Phillips' and Radford's," who don't happen to be the chief bowlers. Much likely bowling talent is lost every year in one of these two ways.

Once a boy bowler is "discovered" he should, in the interests of the game, be most carefully nursed; whereas in the majority of cases he is overbowled before he has left school and is never heard of again.

The bowling (or want of it) that we have seen for some years in the 'Varsity match at Lord's sheds some light in this direction. Except A. F. Morcom and G. G. Napier, neither 'Varsity has had a first-class bowler from any public school in the United Kingdom for some years.

J. F. Ireland and M. Falcon—the last-named first-class without a doubt—serve to prove my contention, as neither was a bowler when at School. Falcon was never heard of in that capacity until after he had been some time at Cambridge, when he began to bowl rather because there was nobody else who could do so than because he had ever evinced any ability in that direction.

E. M. Dowson evidently had a great deal too much bowling to do before he attained his majority, but though a pretty good bowler still, *he ought to have been a world's bowler on the form of his first appearances.*

The best bowlers are allowed to bowl themselves to death at the nets—

I have just written that the really first-class bowler is born and not made. There are people, whose opinions are entitled to the very deepest respect, who differ from that view. But, the matter of constant practice apart, I cannot see in Hirst, Rhodes, Lockwood, Richardson, Smith (W.C.), Blythe, Barnes, and all the long list of celebrated bowlers, anything manufactured. I cannot see how any one of them benefited a wicket from coaching or tuition. Nor have I heard of them having benefited by the advice or coaching of anybody. But these facts need not discourage, nor are they likely to do so, any boy at a public school from trying to develop what bowling ability there may be in him. As I shall deal in the following two articles with batting and fielding, I will now put before my young readers a number of useful hints in the matter of bowling, the devices and methods here described having proved sufficiently successful to take several hundreds of wickets on all kinds of pitches, from mud to matting.

The first thing to be done is to obtain *command of the ball.* Without this a bowler has to depend for wickets upon (1) bad batting, (2) luck, (3) something in his delivery, or in the flight of the ball caused by that something. In other words, *he cannot force the fall of wickets in spite of really good batting,* which can be done only by really good bowling. This in itself is only possible *after the bowler has obtained command of the ball.*

It is customary to din into a young bowler's ears the words, "Keep a length." But there is something to be done before that, for, indeed, the keeping of a length depends for its existence upon the bowler having acquired *command of*

the ball. You cannot keep a length unless you have this command. Therefore, the command must be acquired first.

Command can only be acquired by incessant practice, and, in short, by living with a cricket ball. Constant handling of the ball, flicking it about with finger-spin from hand to hand, trying to pitch it on a selected spot and so on, each and all serve a purpose towards obtaining this precious command.

It is a very simple matter to keep on telling a boy to bowl a length, but he ought not to be expected to do so until he has obtained such a mastery of the art of propelling the ball (by the act of bowling) that he can pitch it *the desired* length.

THERE IS NO FIXED LENGTH

Length varies according to the height, reach, and batting methods of a player, and the state of the turf. A good length ball to a six-foot batsman on a hard wicket is a short one to the same batsman on a soft pitch. Command of the ball enables the bowler to pitch it, within reason, where he likes, and enables him thereby to bowl just the ball he wants to bowl to suit the purpose of himself or his captain, to whose orders a *good* bowler is bound to, and always will, bowl.

We will now assume that our bowler has acquired a fair amount of command over the ball. The next thing to be done is to find his best pace and to keep to it with as high an act of delivery as possible. Many coaches put a very high delivery as a *sine qua non* to success. I do not see that that follows, while admitting that a high delivery is no disadvantage. At the same time if a youngster bowls well and with sufficient effectiveness with what I will call a round-arm delivery, to distinguish it from a high hand-over-head action, I regard it as stupidity frequently to criticise adversely his bowling *because of its low delivery.* Such a bowler should be left alone to develop variations of flight and pace with the action that suits him best, and not be made to worry continually on the doubtful score that though he may be doing jolly well he would certainly do a lot better if he raised his hand higher, *a thing that does not follow as a matter of course.*

Bobby Peel was not such a very bad left-handed bowler, and his arm was never straight above his head at any part of his bowling action.

One of the very best fast right-handed bowlers on a certain wicket of the past ten years is Rushby of Surrey, and he never bowled a straight hand-over-head ball in his life. Much the same thing can be said of several other bowlers. In my opinion it is very easy to make too much of the high-action theory, and any boy who is a passably good bowler without it should be left alone.

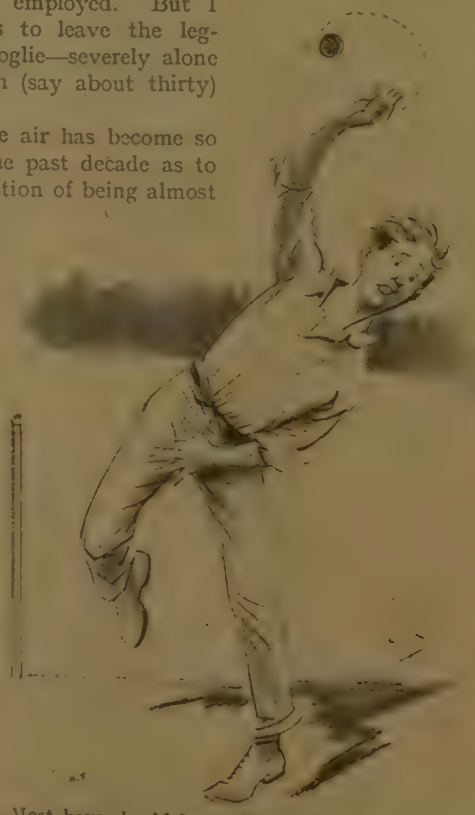
Proceeding, the next thing after command and bowling at a uniform pace is the acquisition of off and leg-break spin. Here, again, a boy cannot do better than live with a cricket ball. The power of spinning a ball can only be developed by incessant practice. As a rule, bowlers who have most spin have fairly long fingers. But there are many cases of short-fingered small-handed folk making very good bowlers. Johnny Briggs had not large hands, and the hands of G. A. Faulkner are not remarkable for their size or for the length of their fingers. If size had everything to do with it, A. D. Nourse would bowl a ball with enough spin on it to make it hum like a top. He and Trott have the largest hands of any cricketer seen of recent years.

There are different methods for spinning the ball, so each boy must discover for himself the way that suits him best. W. Mead,

—Because, forsooth, the chief school batsmen get no practice from "that stuff of Phillips."

one of the most accurate break bowlers who ever bowled a ball, bowls his off-break from a grip I have never seen in the case of any other bowler. He seems to wrap his first finger round the ball and to bowl it out of a thumb-and-first finger grip only. Most bowlers spin it off the first and second fingers on one side and the thumb on the other. That is, for the off break. For the leg-break the third finger (top-joint) is the one usually employed. But I should advise most boys to leave the leg-break—as well as the googlie—severely alone until they are old enough (say about thirty) to know no better.

Swerving the ball in the air has become so much a fashion during the past decade as to have arrived at the distinction of being almost a nuisance in schools' cricket. A nuisance, because it is the easiest of all things to do with a new ball, and in over-doing it (as most boy bowlers are *allowed to*) the real art of bowling becomes sadly neglected. In a recent publication it states that the swerve in cricket "is not produced by spin." Also, that "the bowlers who swerve, one and all declare that they do not spin the ball." I hope no boy bowler will permit his views on swerve-bowling to be influenced by statements of this kind. Suffice it to say that there are several bowlers *in first-class cricket, anyway*, who spin the ball to make it swerve, and who get dozens of wickets as a result of their efforts.



Most boys should leave the leg-break—as well as the googlie—severely alone.

The swerve should be used only occasionally, but always to a batsman just in, especially if the catching in the slips is reliable. Boys are apt to place too much reliance on the swerve, which requires a great deal of practice before the ball can be pitched the dangerous length, and which needs a more or less specially set field for success. Moreover, *it takes good batsmen to get out to swerve bowling*. The average indifferent batsman does not play well enough to touch a well-pitched swerving ball.

Variations of pace and flight follow the desiderata above mentioned—viz., command, style, and break. A good way to bowl a slower ball without change of action is *to grip only half of the ball*, and then to let go of it with the seam perpendicular to the surface of the pitch, and the back of the bowler's hand at the moment of letting go facing towards mid-on. Thus, what practically happens is that only half the ball is bowled, the hand slips off it towards the batsman at a faster pace than the ball, which follows at less speed than appeared certain *judging only by the arm and hand action* (a mistake batsmen are very prone to make). Constant practice is again necessary here. But, especially on hard wickets, the ball is a most useful one. Try it to a forcing batsman and pitch it a little off the wicket on the off-side.

Command of the ball will enable youngsters to become useful in the art of bowling yorkers. While a slow yorker is useful against batsmen who do not move about much, the best yorker is the fast one that is considerably faster than the bowler's ordinary pace. This is a good reason why all medium to slow bowlers *should make a habit of bowling a trifle below the highest speed they are capable of producing*. They have then an extra yard or two of pace up their sleeve to fire off at will, with which to defeat their opponent *by virtue of sheer pace only*. If, on the other hand, they bowl at their top pace all the time there is no such thing for them as a "fast ball." Such a "fast ball" to be of use must be actually fast in the air and off the pitch, and not only in the bowler's intention.

For really fast bowlers the yorker is an absolute necessity. He *must* bowl it to every new batsman at least five times in the first three overs. The yorker is not bowled anything like so often in first-class cricket as it ought to be, and used to be. It is still, properly bowled, one of the most deadly deliveries in the game, and

no bowler's repertoire is complete without it. It cannot be included in the repertoire of any bowler who has not got command of the ball.

There is much virtue in the right kind of full pitch. I saw Blythe bowl nine to Hayward during half an hour's cricket *without a run being scored off the nine!* Practise bowling straight and hard at the bails. Such a ball, even if runs come from it, disturbs a batsman and tends to make him think the bowler is erratic. In itself this is something of a help, as then the batsman gets to look out for "all sorts," and that fact keeps runs down.

Don't be afraid to try tricks.

Bother an odd four or two. If you wait for a batsman *to get himself out* you will get many a long day unnecessarily. You may lose a match or two here and there by trying the tricks, but you will win more than you lose for the same reason.

And now, to conclude my paper on bowling, a few general observations.

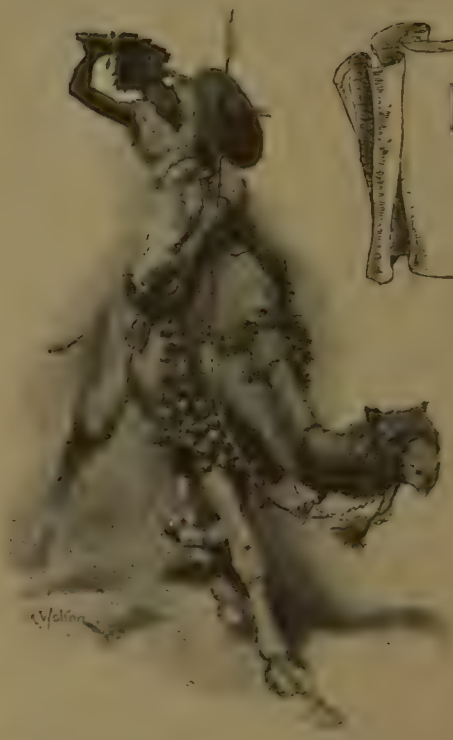
The bowler and *not* the captain has *first* call in setting the field. A "good" captain, after making due observations, will offer suggestions to his bowler, but will very seldom alter the field against his bowler's wish—rather than that a change of bowling.

The right time for a captain who is a bowler-in-chief to take himself off is *soon* after the thought has occurred to him that *he is not likely to get wickets*. He will thus treat himself just as he would any of his other bowlers. Most bowling captains keep themselves on too long, generally through over-keenness.

No bowling captain should hesitate for a moment about putting himself on. If he is worthy of the post he will know when to do so.

Finally, never mind being hit, remembering that you cannot get wickets unless you make the batsmen do something. And try to the last over, remembering that *it is possible* to get six wickets down in the course of an over. *This will happen one of these days* as sure as the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening.

Mr. E. H. D. Sewell, the well-known all-round cricketer, who is contributing these special cricket articles to THE CAPTAIN.



In Arab Hands

By

PERCY F. WESTERMAN

Illustrated by John de Walton

"I WISH the governor would say 'yes,'" remarked Eric Mortlake, earnestly. "It's a chance of a lifetime. When I mention it he replies by saying he must be back for that board meeting at the end of next month. It's all rot. I don't suppose the company will go smash any the sooner if he isn't present at the meeting. Besides, it will be hard lines on you."

"That's so," agreed Ambrose Hessler, a strapping young American of sixteen. "I guess Colonel Mortlake couldn't get us a passage unless he went too. Just you try to coax him after dinner. He'll be more reasonable then, I reckon."

The two lads were standing on the platform of Khartoum Central Station. Eric Mortlake, who was only three months the senior of his newly found chum, was a tall, broad-shouldered youth, who presented a striking contrast to his short, wiry sire.

Colonel Mortlake, retired from the — Royal Chalkshires, was wintering in Egypt and the Soudan, part of the object of his tour being to show Eric the sites of the hard-fought battles in which he had taken part. Now the southern limit of his intended trip had been reached, and in the colonel's opinion it was time to consider the advisability of returning home.

Less than a month ago Eric had chummed up with Ambrose Hessler while staying at Shepheard's Hotel at Cairo. The lads had a lot in common, and curiously enough the somewhat reticent colonel had taken quite a fancy to Ambrose's father, Sampson P. Hessler, a United States senator and a veteran of the Spanish-American War.

Sampson P. Hessler was a tall, gaunt New Englander with a pronounced Yankee twang, and an undisguised admiration for everything British.

Another individual who had, to use Ambrose's term, "cottoned on" to the colonel, was Stanley Foyle, a well-to-do Somersetshire man, whose one absorbing hobby was amateur photography. From the time the steamer left the Kasir-el-Nil bridge at Cairo till she tied up at her journey's end at Assuan, and again between Assuan and Wady Halfa, Foyle was kodaking as hard as he possibly could from early morn till sunset. Large deal boxes filled with spools made it evident that this keen amateur meant to take back with him an exhaustive—in a dual sense—souvenir of his Nile tour.

Colonel Mortlake had carried out his programme faithfully. From Khartoum he had taken his son and his two American friends to Metamneh, and thence to the battlefields of Abu Klea and Gubat, where nearly thirty years ago he, then a captain, had fought after the hazardous march across the Bahuida Desert. He had also shown Eric the field of Omdurman, where he had witnessed the *debacle* that meant the final downfall of Mahdism.

"Wonderful changes!" exclaimed Sampson P. Hessler.

"There have been," replied the colonel. "Then I had to tramp every yard of the way; now we sit at our ease in a luxurious steamer or in the saloon of the Sudan Railway train. In '85 one dare not struggle half a mile beyond the zareba without standing a good chance of being sliced up by the Fuzzy-Wuzzies. Now the Sudan is as safe as Park Lane."

And now came what Eric termed the chance of a lifetime. One of the Sudan Government steamers was about to make a special trip up the White Nile to Gondokoro, a distance of about eight hundred miles above Khartoum. This voyage was in addition to the regular postal service maintained between these two towns, and was for the purpose of conveying an accumulation of Government stores to Uganda. The officer in charge, Major Yaverland, happened to be an old comrade of Colonel Mortlake, and upon making the discovery the former invited the colonel and his friends to have a month's trip in the stern-wheeler *Fashoda*.

Eric jumped at the idea. The major's glowing description of the shooting that there was to be had—crocodiles, hippopotami, and possibly lions—was too tempting, whilst the free and easy life on board, after the conventionalities of the Nile passenger boats, would form a culminating point to an enjoyable holiday.

But Colonel Mortlake demurred. He did not give Major Yaverland a definite refusal, but he implied that there were obstacles in his way and that it was necessary that he should think of returning to England.

Sampson P. Hessler was almost as keen on the trip as were his son and Eric; but wisely he refrained from putting any pressure upon his military acquaintance; he realised that Eric was the best one to get the colonel to change his mind.

As the two lads sauntered slowly back to the Grand Hotel they met the colonel returning from a curio-hunt, accompanied by Nikolas, the dragoman, and Seyd, his Egyptian servant, and a donkey laden with bargains picked up in the native market. That was a bad sign, for Colonel Mortlake had expressed his intention of deferring his curio-hunt until almost the end of his stay at Khartoum, in order not to have the trouble of storing the additional baggage.

"Well, you young rascals," he exclaimed. "Where have you been? I missed you after breakfast, or I should have taken you round the curio-shops."

"Musty shows run by dirty Arabs," remarked Eric. "It's risky, pater. I say, Hessler, the governor doesn't look at all up to the mark, does he?" and the lad nudged his companion as a sign that he should acquiesce.

"Oh, I'm all right," asserted the colonel boldly, yet there was a shade of anxiety on his face. At his age he was in the habit of imagining that he was a victim to various ailments; his dutiful son knew this, and took advantage of his parent's ill-founded fears.

"You do not look so well as you did yesterday, sir," said Ambrose Hessler, entering into the plot. "Perhaps Khartoum is too trying."

"Then the sooner I get out of it the better," declared the colonel.

"Railway journeys are trying, though," objected Eric.

"Look here, my boy, I know what you are driving at," said his father. "It's that Gondokoro trip."

The lads flushed deeply under their tanned complexions.

"It is," said Eric, looking his father straight in the face. "You see, we both want to go ever so badly, and you won't——"

"Yes, I said I wouldn't go," interrupted Colonel Mortlake, "or, rather, I couldn't. But that's no reason why you shouldn't. As a matter of fact, I've just seen Yaverland. He was sorry I couldn't manage it, but he will be very pleased for Mr. Hessler and you lads to sample the accommodation on board the *Fashoda*. I'll mention the matter to your father, Hessler, and see what he has to say."

Before lunch all the preliminary details were arranged. Colonel Mortlake was to return to England, leaving Eric in Senator Hessler's charge, and as the American was making his way back to New York *via* London, he promised to see his son's chum safely home.

At ten o'clock on the following Friday morning the *Fashoda* started on her 1,600 mile voyage. In addition to Major Yaverland, two subordinate Government officers, and Sampson P. Hessler's party, there were on board the *rais* (native captain) and crew, twelve men of a Sudanese regiment, and seven native servants.

Stanley Foyle was the latest addition to the guests of Major Yaverland. At Senator Hessler's request the major willingly extended the invitation, and the delight of the amateur photographer knew no bounds. Almost as soon as the stern paddle began to revolve Foyle's kodak was in evidence, snapping indiscriminately at every *dahabeeyah* (Nile sailing-boat) that glided silently along under the faint breeze.

Eric brought his rifle—a sporting Lee-Enfield—and two hundred rounds of ammunition. The rifle had been a present from his father, but unknown to the latter the lad, not content with the ordinary ball ammunition, had surreptitiously bought a hundred rounds of cartridges with explosive bullets.

"It's no use plugging an elephant or a hippo with a .320," he explained to his chum. "Major Yaverland told me one might knock one over with a lucky shot, but that's not good enough. We'll have some sport, old chap."

A week passed. The *Fashoda* plugged steadily away against the strong current of the White Nile. Occasionally halts were made at the various Government stations on the banks of the river, but no unusual incident occurred until the stern-wheeler encountered a thick growth of sudd, or vegetable matter, that is a serious drawback to navigation on the Upper Nile.

For two hours the crew worked hard, cutting and parting the wire-like tendrils, while, with her engines stopped every five minutes, the *Fashoda* fought her way through the weed.

"That's the last for some distance, at all events," announced Major Yaverland, who with his guests had taken up his stand on the awning-covered bridge. "There's quite a long stretch of open water."

Evidently the *rais* was in a hurry to get the vessel clear of the entanglement, for as soon as the bows were free he telegraphed for full speed ahead.

In a few seconds the mischief was done. Dense masses of weed wound themselves round the paddles. The largest anchor and cable ever made could not have brought the steamer up more effectively. Then, caught by the current, her bows swung round, and with a dull crash a submerged rock struck the *Fashoda* about twenty feet from the stern on her starboard side.

There she stuck, the water pouring into the fracture in her thin steel plating. Hampered with lofty deck-houses it seemed as if the shallow-draughted craft would capsize, but beyond a momentary excitement on the part of the natives perfect discipline was maintained. Under the direction of Major Yaverland the leak was temporarily kept in check by an improvised coffer dam of canvas backed with bales and boxes, while an anchor was laid out to ease the strain caused by the vessel grinding against the rock.

"All in a day's work," remarked the major cheerfully, after it was ascertained that the water no longer gained in the hold.

"Guess we'll have to wait till one of the regular mail steamers comes up," hazarded Sampson P. Hessler.

"Not if I can help it," replied Major Yaverland. "We'll lighten her as much as possible, warp her clear of rock, then heel her sufficiently for a plate to be riveted over the hole. It will mean a couple of days' work, so if you like I'll have a tent rigged up ashore and you can amuse yourselves while the salvage work is in progress."

"Can't we help?" asked the senator.

"Plenty of hands to do that business, my dear sir. Now's a chance for the two lads to do a bit of shooting. There ought to be plenty of sport without going far up the banks of the river."

Eric and young Hessler were delighted with the suggestion. The excitement of a wreck paled into insignificance when the possibilities of a shooting expedition were in evidence.

"Captain Winchester will be glad to go with you. He's an old hand at big game shooting. But before I can spare him we must get the blasting powder ashore," said the major.

"Blasting powder?" repeated the American.

"Yes, five hundredweight of it. Safe enough, of course; but it's best out of the way when we are handling heavy gear. I estimate that we must get nearly ten tons of stores ashore before we can lighten the old packet sufficiently. Luckily we carry two very decent boats."

It was late in the afternoon before the blasting powder was conveyed ashore. Tents were erected for the Sudanese soldiers detailed to act as guards over the ever-growing pile of salvaged stores, but at Major Yaverland's suggestion his guests were to remain on board at night, since there was no fear of the *Fashoda's* predicament becoming more serious.

Directly after breakfast the shooting party proceeded ashore. Stanley Foyle, with his hard-worked camera, went also, his intention being to get a striking picture of the game falling under the bullets of the hunters. With the party went Nikolas, the Greek dragoman, whom Senator Hessler engaged upon Colonel Mortlake's departure for England, not as a guide, but merely to satisfy a passing whim, and Seyd, the Egyptian servant.

The country was practically on the verge of the desert and the tropical forest. That the sand was encroaching was evident by the fact that here and there were patches of tree-clad ground, surrounded by a barren scrub.

With unflagging energy Eric and his American chum tramped miles. Spoor they found, but lacking experience they were unable to get a shot, while, what was worse, they prevented Captain Winchester and the senator from getting any sport.

"Rotten, I call it!" ejaculated Eric upon returning to the camp. "It's tamer than

rabbit-shooting. Then, at all events, you do have a chance of using a cartridge."

"To-day has been your day," observed Winchester. "To-morrow, if you'll take a hint from me, we'll go to work in a different fashion."

"How?" asked young Hessler.

"For one thing, we'll work against the wind. It's our only chance of balking the animals' sense of smell. Also, we won't have so much talking."

"Why didn't you tell us?" asked Eric.

Captain Winchester smiled.

"From the scraps of conversation I unwittingly overheard I took it for granted that you lads were born Nimrods. One has to gain experience even at the cost of a five-mile tramp in the blazing sun."

"That's taken us down a peg," remarked Eric when the two lads were alone. "To-morrow we'll let him run the show."

Brandishing spears, the Arabs forced their way through the scrub towards the entrapped white men.

When the next day came there was a light westerly wind blowing. That meant that the party would have to go away from the river for about five miles, make a wide detour, and work back again against the wind.

Nikolas and Seyd accompanied their master, the ex-dragoman carrying the spare rifles, while Seyd was laden with a substantial luncheon basket.

"There's a spoor," announced Ambrose Hessler, pointing to some well-defined foot-prints in the sand.

"No use to us," said Winchester. "They are camel tracks. Come on, let's work our way round towards those palms. We may find water there, and where there's a well the chances are there will be some game."

"Let's hope so," added Eric. "If it's only an antelope."

It was nearly a mile to the palm trees, the intervening ground being covered with a kind of mimosa thorn. Winchester and young Mortlake led the way, followed by the two Hesslers. Close behind the latter walked Foyle, his pockets bulging with spools both used and unused, while, under the captain's orders, Nikolas and Seyd kept quite five hundred yards in the rear.

"Luck!" whispered Winchester, at the same time holding up a warning hand to the two Americans. "Elephants, by Jove! Look at the spoor."

Crouching and taking advantage of the clumps of thorns the hunters edged cautiously towards the spot where they expected to find their quarry. It was fatiguing work, for the sun beat down fiercely upon their bent backs, while at almost every step the sharp spikes of the thorns pierced their clothing like needles. Yet in the excitement all discomfort vanished.

"Confound that rascal!" muttered Winchester under his breath, for either the dragoman or the Egyptian had given vent to a shrill shout. "What's he up to? That's frightened every elephant within a couple of miles."

Eric straightened himself and looked angrily in the direction of the two servants. As he did so he gave an exclamation of surprise.

On either side of the belt of scrub was an extensive expanse of sand. Riding in single file were two bands of Arabs mounted on swift *hieries*. The men were armed with broad-bladed spears, short-hafted knives, and in some cases with long, straight, cross-hilted swords; while on their left arm they carried a circular hide shield. They were dressed in dirty, and for the most part ragged, cotton garments, leaving their thin but muscular limbs exposed, while their shock-headed crop of hair flopped about with the irregular motion of the gaudily bedecked steeds.

"Who are these fellows, Winchester?" asked Sampson P. Hessler, with a tinge of anxiety in his voice.

"Oh, merely a tribe migrating to a fresh camping ground," announced the captain, carelessly. "There are plenty of them about the district. Now, Foyle, here's a chance for that kodak of yours."

Foyle needed no second bidding. Forcing his way through the thorns he gained the open ground nearly abreast of the centre of one of the lines of Arabs. There he stood still, bending over the finder of his camera.

"Look out!" shouted Winchester in sudden alarm. The warning came too late. A Baggara swung sideways in his high-pommelled saddle, and with the flat of his sword struck the unfortunate Foyle a heavy blow across the head. Without a groan the luckless photographer dropped limply upon the sand. Simultaneously both columns of Arabs halted; at the word of command their camels sank upon their knees while their lithe and active riders dismounted. With brandished spears and swords the Baggaras began to force their way through the scrub towards the entrapped white men.

"Lower that rifle," ordered Winchester as Eric brought his Lee-Enfield to his shoulder. "It's useless. That chief has just shouted that our lives will be spared if we surrender. A hundred to four is long odds. They mean to hold us to ransom. Resistance would mean massacre."

The captain spoke hurriedly yet calmly. He realised that he and his companions were cornered, and that flight and fight were equally impossible.

The next instant the luckless hunters were captured and in the hands of the Arabs. Their weapons and ammunition were taken away, their clothing torn and their pockets rifled, while their arms were secured behind their backs with leathern thongs. Two of the Arabs, roughly lifting the unconscious Foyle by his shoulders and legs, dragged him to where his companions were huddled together and threw him upon the ground. By his deep, irregular breathing it was evident that the first victim of the Arabs' ferocity still lived.

Meanwhile the attention of young Mortlake and his comrade was directed elsewhere. Seyd had vanished, but the unctuous Nikolas, who had for some time remained hidden in the scrub, had taken to his heels and, screaming with terror, was tearing towards the nearest palm-tree. It was a forlorn hope, for twenty yards behind him rode a villainous-looking Arab.

As if delighted at the dragoman's terror the Baggara checked the speed of his *hierie*. With the big toe of his right foot supported in the stirrup and his left leg flung round the pommel of his saddle, and scorning to make use of the reins, the Arab seemed part and parcel of his steed. His brandished sword glittered ominously in the dazzling sunlight, as with fiendish shouts he pursued his prey.

"Look behind you, you lads," said Captain

Winchester, hurriedly, but even the fear of instant death would not make the young captives turn their eyes from the tragedy that was about to be enacted.

Nikolas succeeded in gaining the palm-tree, then with the agility of a cat he began to swarm up the rough trunk. The Baggara waited till he was almost level with his sword arm.

Young Mortlake shut his eyes. Had he been able he would have stopped his ears. When he looked again the wretched dragoman was no longer to be seen. The Baggaras had no use for a comparatively worthless prisoner.

The Arabs made no attempt to move their captives. Instead they left a body of about a dozen fierce-looking scoundrels to keep guard while the rest mounted their camels and rode rapidly eastwards.

"They are going towards the river, by Jove!" ejaculated Winchester. "Surely they won't rush the camp and perhaps the steamer as well? And the major sent all the quick-firing ammunition ashore, too."

A blow from the butt-end of a rifle served as a far from gentle reminder that conversation was not permitted amongst the prisoners, and in wretched silence they sat, grilling under the hot sun and chafing in their bonds.

Just before sunset the captives were given a draught of water and a small portion of meal. A large fire was kindled, and the Arabs took turns in slumbering.

Slowly the night passed. Foyle had recovered consciousness, but showed signs of light-headedness. More out of regard for the possibilities of a ransom than out of pity one of the Arabs tied a moistened strip of linen round his wounded head.

"What do you think of our chances?" asked the elder American in a whisper.

As the Arabs with fierce yells rushed towards them, Eric fired. A deafening explosion followed, the ground trembled violently, and a thousand lights danced before his eyes.

"We may be rescued by a detachment of the camel corps; it will take a fortnight to get the men up the river. We may be ransomed, or——"

"Or what?"

"Taken far into the desert and sold as

slaves. Don't say anything to the youngsters, but there's the possibility. It is a generally accepted fact that at this moment there are dozens of Italians captured in Tripoli who are languishing in captivity far from any hope of rescue."

Sampson P. Hessler shuddered. He was thinking not of himself but of the two lads entrusted to his care.

"Then you think there's very little chance of rescue?"

"No; on the contrary, I have great hopes. But at the same time we must be prepared for any emergency. Prepared is forearmed, you know."

"What's that?" asked Eric, sitting up with a start. "It's rifle firing."

"It is," assented Captain Winchester. "Our Sudanese exchanging shots with the Baggaras. That's good. Major Yaverland will know why we haven't turned up, and there won't be another case of a handful of our men being surprised by these rascals."

In about a quarter of an hour the firing ceased. The Arabs were now wide awake, peering through the starlight in the direction of the river, as if anticipating the return of their fellow tribesmen.

It was not until dawn was breaking with the suddenness peculiar to tropical climes that a chorus of shouts, punctuated with a salvo of small-arms, announced the raiders' return.

That they had been successful was evident by the heavily laden camels, and Winchester was able to identify several of the bales and boxes that had been taken ashore.

"I don't think they've done any damage to the *Fashoda*," he remarked. "They've made a good haul, notwithstanding; look, there are the boxes of blasting powder."

"If only——" began Eric.

"Only what?"

"We could plank a shot into that box. See, nearly all the Arabs are gathering round the spoils like flies round a honey-pot."

"It's no use wishing," said the elder Hessler. "We're as helpless as trussed-up fowls. All the same, if that powder were to go off——"

Meanwhile the men told off to act as guards over the prisoners had, with one exception, made their way to where the rest of the Baggaras were haggling and quarrelling over the spoil. The Arab who remained was a particularly repugnant-looking man who had appropriated young Mortlake's sporting rifle and was evidently proud of his new acquisition.

"If only I could get hold of that rifle of mine," said Eric in a low tone. "I'd risk sending an explosive bullet into that powder. Two hundred yards is a fairly safe distance for us, Captain Winchester."

"Fairly; but what's the use of making impossible plans? And where are the explosive bullets coming from?"

"There are five in the magazine of that rifle, anyhow."

"What, you young rotter! And you imperilled the safety of the steamer by having explosive bullets in your possession?"

"Well, what was I to do?" asked Eric with well-assumed innocence. "The major told me that for big-game shooting explosive bullets were the thing, so I bought some before we left Khartoum. Worse luck, that greasy scoundrel has the rifle."

"Steady on," cautioned Sampson P. Hessler. "There's a chief coming this way."

The sheikh, a tall, dignified-looking man—the only one of the raiders who wore a *haik*—advanced in a leisurely manner, and after surveying the captives with a supercilious air, entered into conversation with their guard. Once or twice the latter grinned ferociously and touched the haft of his two-edged knife.

"Quite a mild-looking old gentleman," remarked the senator when the sheikh had rejoined the Arabs gathered round the spoils.

"Yes," assented Winchester. "Look here, Hessler, can you bear bad news?"

"Guess I've had some in my time," replied the senator, grimly. "A little extra won't make much difference."

"Not so loud. Don't say a word to the lads. I know most of the dialects of the Sudanese. That mild-looking old gentleman, as you term him, has just given orders for our throats to be cut."

"What?"

"Fact. We are encumbrances," continued Winchester steadily. "You may as well know. You are too old, Foyle is wounded, and I am not up to their standard, I suppose."

"And the lads?"

"Are to be carried off into the interior."

"What's that?" asked Ambrose Hessler, who had overheard the last question and its reply. "Are we going to be separated?"

The young American, in his eagerness, had incautiously raised his voice. The Arab turned swiftly, ran towards the prostrate prisoners, and savagely prodded the lad in the ribs with Eric's rifle.

This wanton act of cruelty was more than Eric could bear. The Baggara's back was

turned to him. In an instant young Mortlake drew his feet up, and lashing out with all his might, caught the Arab behind the knees.

The follow dropped like a felled ox, the rifle falling from his grasp. Ere he could utter a sound Senator Hessler rolled his body over the Baggara's head, crushing him into insensibility.

"Quickly—that knife!" gasped Eric.

The captain managed to possess himself of the keen blade, and, grasping it in his bound hands, sawed through the lad's bonds. This done, he proceeded to free the rest of his companions.

"See that the sights are all right," cautioned Winchester, hurriedly, as Eric snatched up his rifle and opened the cut-off of the magazine.

So intent were the Arabs over their noisy distribution of the booty that none of them had noticed the sudden bid for liberty on the part of their captives.

Eric was as cool as a cucumber. His nerves, shaken considerably by the ordeal of the preceding day and night, were now as steady as a rock.

"Lie down, all of you," ordered the captain, sharply. "Now, Eric, let 'em have it."

In a prone position, with his feet stretched wide apart and his left arm directly under the barrel of his rifle, the lad aimed steadily at one of the boxes of blasting powder. He pressed the trigger. There was a spurt of flame, a sharp report, and a thin haze of bluish vapour.

"Missed!" ejaculated Winchester. "Try again, my boy."

At the noise of the rifle the Arabs turned in the direction whence the sound came. A blood-curdling yell burst from nearly a hundred throats, as the Baggaras snatched up their spears and shields prior to making a combined rush upon the troublesome captives.

But ere the foremost of the Baggaras had covered twenty yards Eric fired again. This time he made due allowance for the refraction of the atmosphere caused by the heat ascending from the sand. He was conscious of a deafening concussion that completely out-voiced the report of his rifle. The ground trembled violently, then a thousand lights flashed across his eyes and everything became a blank.

* * * * *

"Better, old man?"

Eric had opened his eyes to find himself in one of the cabins of the *Fashoda*. The vibrations of the stern-wheel told him that the steamer was once more under way.

"That you, Hessler. Ah, I remember. That explosion knocked all the stuffing out of me. What happened after that?"

Ambrose Hessler turned his head and looked inquiringly at the doctor.

"Tell him," said that worthy. "Good news won't do him any harm."

"You wiped out a dangerous rising with that lucky shot of yours," declared the young American, enthusiastically. "The Baggaras were stirred up by another Mahdi, and had they contrived to carry on their initial success there might have been serious trouble. But when a false prophet who declares himself immune from all harm from the infidels is blown sky-high the faith of his followers is apt to be shaken. At all events, the survivors were too shaken to do us any harm."

"How did you get on?"

"Almost as bad as you, old chap. Fortunately another steamer came down the river with two companies of Sudanese infantry on board. These were landed to rescue us if possible and to ascertain the cause of the concussion that was distinctly felt on board. They found the five of us all as helpless as logs. Winchester hasn't quite recovered his sense of hearing yet."

"And where are we now?"

"Off back to Khartoum. Gondokoro's no go. The steamer was floated all right, but Major Yaverland, having lost such a lot of his stores, decided to put back. Of course, there'll be a court of inquiry over the business we'll have to attend. The major told my governor that he didn't think there would be any blame attached to anybody; the only difficulty he anticipated was to explain how you came to have explosive bullets in your possession."

"Blissful ignorance of the regulations on my part," replied Eric, wearily, turning on his side. "I'm awfully sleepy, old man. After all, it was a fluke that did us a good turn, that lucky shot of mine."

THE WAY TO WIN

By F. A. M. WEBSTER

Part III.

THROWING THE JAVELIN

THIS ancient and most fascinating sport is entirely unknown in our schools, and is practically unknown throughout Great Britain. This is strange, for the weapon was our forefathers' stand-by in troublous times and his means of killing his food in the chase. Also it figures prominentiy in the programme at the Modern Olympian Games.

As the sport will be so entirely new to my readers, it will be as well to describe it and also the weapon employed rather fully. Incidentally, throwing the javelin is a sport which might very usefully replace throwing the cricket ball, an event which one never gets a chance to compete in after leaving school; moreover, we must have javelin and discus throwers to represent us at future Olympiads; therefore, it is left to the schools to practise these unusual events.

The javelin is a spear of wood 8·5ft. long and 1·6lb. in weight, with a sharp steel tip, and having at the point of balance a binding of whip-cord to form a grip; at this grip the javelin must be held.

Throwing takes place from behind a scratch line formed by a balk of timber pegged firmly to the ground, the run is unlimited, but the scratch line must not be overstepped before the javelin has come to earth, or the throw will be rendered invalid.

All throws are measured perpendicularly from the point of impact to the scratch line or the scratch line produced.

Let us now consider the sport itself.

For this game the athlete should be tall, well built, and with a good turn of speed, for the pace at which the scratch line is approached plays no small part in the success or failure of the thrower's efforts.

First the distance of the run must be accurately arranged and a point determined and marked from which the main effort of the thrower commences. This must be at such a distance from the board as will allow of the impetus of the throw carrying the thrower right up to the scratch line after the javelin has left the hand.

The thrower, having arranged all the preliminaries, now goes to the commencement of the run, turning the left side of the body towards the proposed direction of the throw. He grasps the javelin firmly at the point of balance with the throwing hand level with the eyes. The left foot and arm are advanced, the body with the back well hollowed sinks back over the bent right knee, and, at the same time, the right arm is brought gently back on a straight line to its fullest extent, the hand passing as close to the body as possible.

This preliminary poise is to tauten the muscles, the sinking back takes place two or three times, the throwing hand coming up level with the eyes as the body rises, the arm coming back to the fullest extent as the body sinks back.

At the end of these preliminary "toning up" movements, when the body comes into the perpendicular for the last time with the javelin on a level with the eyes and parallel to the ground, there follows a spring forward and a swift run. The greatest pace should have been

attained when within ten or twelve feet of the scratch line, for it is at this point that the throw proper commences.

The right foot plugs against the ground, the knee being slightly bent forward, the left leg and arm are outflung, the throwing arm flashes back on a straight line to the limit of its reach, and, at the same time, the body is bent well back from the waist and turned around from left to right.

Jumping forward strongly from the right leg, the athlete heaves up the shoulders, cutting away the left arm behind the left side and reversing the body from left to right; as the right side begins to come around, the javelin is hurled by the right arm with all the force of the body behind the effort. The momentum generated in the foregoing movements will carry the athlete forward to the scratch line where he must stay poised until the javelin has come to earth. When the body is at the throwing line the right foot should be close up against the throwing board; the left leg may be swung round to the right rear to aid the thrower in retaining his balance. The sport is an excellent one and the pleasure to be derived from the throwing quite amazing.

WORLD AND OLYMPIC RECORDS
(200ft. 1 11-20ins.)
J. J. Sarristo, Finland.

BRITISH RECORD (179ft. 10½ins.)
E. Lemming, Sweden.

U.S.A. RECORD (166ft. 10ins.)
H. G. Lott, U.S.A.

OLYMPIC RULES

GENERAL RULES FOR JAVELIN, DISCUS, AND HAMMER THROWING

(*a*) Only implements provided by the Olympic Committee shall be used in the Throwing competitions. (Ordinary competitions, each athlete may use his own hammer, javelin, shot, or discus, but all other competitors must be allowed to use the same implement if they wish.)

(*b*) Each competitor shall be allowed three throws, and the three best shall throw again three times; the farthest throw of the six throws shall decide the order between the three. In the case of a tie, another throw must be made to decide the winner. The result of the additional throwing shall determine the position only of those who have thrown again.

(*c*) A throw is counted as a trial, yet without being measured, when the competitor, before the throw has been marked by the proper official, with any part of his body touches the ground outside the outer part of the throwing circle or with any part of his body passes over the taking-off limit.

By the taking-off limit is meant the inner edge of the marked scratch line.

JAVELIN THROWING

(*a*) The javelin shall be of wood with a sharp iron point. It shall be 800 grammes (approximate 1¾lbs.) in weight, and 2.6 metres (8½ft. approximate) in length. The javelin shall about the centre of gravity have a grip formed by a binding 16cm. (6¼ins.) broad; neither thongs nor notches shall be allowed in the shaft, and no other hold than the above-mentioned binding shall be permitted.

(*b*) The throwing shall take place from behind a serrated line, consisting of a wooden bar, of at least 10cm. (3¾ins.) width, and about 3cm. (1.18ins.) thickness, securely fastened to the ground; the extent of run is unlimited.

(*c*) The javelin must be held by the grip and no other method of holding is admissible.

(*d*) No throw shall be counted in which the point of the javelin does not strike the ground before any part of the shaft.

(*e*) The throw is measured from the point at which the point of the javelin first strikes the ground perpendicularly to the scratch line or the scratch line produced.

Photo, Sport and General.]
Correct attitude of the javelin thrower, preparatory to the run forward.

THROWING THE DISCUS

There is no need to talk to the present-day public-school boy of the antiquity of the art of discus throwing, for it will be remembered how repeatedly Homer refers to the pastime in his various works.

The only style with which we need concern ourselves to-day is the free style, in which the discus is thrown from a circle 8ft. 2½ins. in diameter after one turn has been made. Throwing in this style is a constant quantity in the Olympian programme; the incorrectly named "As at Athens" style which appeared at the Olympic Games in London in 1908 was obviously founded on Myson's misconstructed "Discobolos."

The discus may be described as a convex plate of wood 4.4lbs. in weight and 8.7ins. in diameter, bound about the edge with a metal

ring 0.86in. in width. The thickness through the middle is 1.77ins.

Throwing takes place from a circle 8ft. 2½ins. in diameter, and all throws to count must fall within a 90° sector. The thrower commits a foul and the throw is not measured if any part of his body touches the ground outside the circle before the discus has come to earth.

This sport is so closely allied to hammer-

W. E. B. Henderson about to begin turning prior to throwing the discus.

throwing that the athlete taking it up will be well advised to read the article recently appearing on the art of hammer-throwing; the same principle—centrifugal force—is involved in both sports.

The circle is set out upon the ground, as shown in the accompanying sketch.

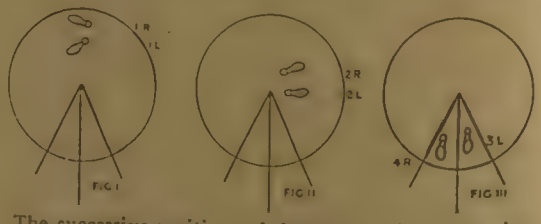
The first thing the novice must learn is to make the discus "scale," that is, to fly spinning on an almost horizontal plane. He will learn to do this by throwing from a standing position without attempting to turn, imparting the spin by drawing the fingers off sharply along the edge of the discus from left to right as it leaves the hand.

Having learnt to make the missile "scale," the novice may go into the circle preparatory to trying a throw with the turn. On entering the circle he takes up his position with the feet as shown in Fig. 1.

The athlete should get into as comfortable a position as may be with the left arm outstretched and left side turned in the direction in which it is proposed to make the throw. The discus lays upon the palm of the outstretched right hand, being retained in this position by the first joints of the fingers.

The right arm with discus in hand is now swept across the front of the body, the back of the hand being turned uppermost as the swing continues until the discus comes to rest on the palm of the left hand. This swinging continues, gradually getting faster until it is felt that sufficient momentum has been generated. Then as the discus comes well back behind the right side the thrower begins to turn with the arms hanging out loosely at right angles to the body, the back of the throwing hand being uppermost so that the discus is retained in its position by centrifugal force alone. It must be remembered that the body is always to travel ahead of the throwing arm to get plenty of scope for the final sweep as the arm flashes out for the throw.

As the turn commences, the thrower pivots on the left foot, whirling around to the position shown in Fig. 2. The movement is carried on without break or stop, the feet arriving at the position shown in Fig. 3, in which figure the left foot only is drawn as the right leg is in the air at this point. As the right shoulder comes round to the front the maximum speed should have been attained, and at this point the throwing arm, which until now has hung out loosely, comes into action swinging across the body shoulder high with all the thrower's force, and imparting to the discus a right to left spin



The successive positions of the feet for discus-throwing. The oblique lines represent the sector of 90 degrees, within which all throws must fall. The line in the centre shows the direction of the throw.

by drawing the finger-tips off the edge in that direction as the missile leaves the hand.

The greatest difficulty most men experience in this sport is to get any resistance from so light a throwing implement, but schoolboys will of course not find this difficulty so hard to over-come.

Other troubles are the difficulty of keeping the discus in the hand when turning, and also in making it "scale" when in flight.

These difficulties can, however, all be overcome by careful practice.

WORLD'S RECORD (151ft. 6ins.)
E Niklander, Finland.

OLYMPIC RECORD (148ft. 3.9ins.)
A. R. Taipale, Finland.

BRITISH RECORD (134ft. 2ins.)
M. Sheridan, U.S.A.

THE OLYMPIC RULES

THROWING THE DISCUS

(*a*) The discus shall be 2 kilogrammes (4.41bs.) in weight, and 22 centimetres (8.7ins.) in diameter, thickness in the middle, 45mm. (1.77ins.); thickness at the rounded off edge, 22mm. (0.86ins.).

(*b*) The discus shall be thrown from a circle of about 2.5 metres (8.2ft.) diameter.

(*c*) All throws to be valid must fall within a 90° sector marked on the ground.

(*d*) A throw will be measured from the point at which the discus first strikes the ground to the centre of the circle, after which the distance is reckoned from the taking-off limit.

THE STANDING JUMPS

The young athlete who aspires to attain to prominence in these events must not only be endowed with wonderful springing powers, but must also be blessed with an absolutely placid nerve and supreme self-confidence; for to make a sudden spring from an absolutely stationary position without any preliminary run, to work one up to it, equires the whole of one's determination, and no small amount of will power. A nice understanding of the evolutions involved is also necessary, together with beautifully controlled muscular action.

THE STANDING HIGH JUMP

For the sake of description we will assume that the athlete takes up his position with the left side next to the bar.

The first difficulty the beginner will encounter is to know the distance at which he should take up his stand away from the bar. The proper distance is ascertained by standing with the clenched fist resting upon the hip, then when the point of the elbow touches the bar the athlete is at the right distance away from it.

The feet are placed close together and parallel to each other, and when the athlete is comfortably settled the arms are drawn above the head and the body extended upwards to the fullest extent. The arms are then swung down and up to the back; at the same time the knees are bent and the body inclined forward; then the arms are again flung high up in front and the spring is made. As the body rises the left leg is flung as high as possible while the right or outside leg is allowed to hang loosely. When the body is about centralised over the bar the left leg is allowed to fall and to hang easily while the right leg is swung high, the seat being raised over the bar by hunching up the shoulders. The crossing movement is further aided by inclining the head and shoulders in the direction of the body's landing.

The standing high jump. As the body is centralised over the bar, the leg first thrown over is allowed to fall, while the other is thrown high. The photograph shows R. Ewry, ex-Olympic and American champion.

It will also be found of great service if the jumper can acquire the knack of hitching up the hips by throwing up the stomach at the crucial moment as the bar is crossed.

I strongly recommend the boy who intends taking up the standing jumps to go in for a course of shot-putting with left and right hand alternately, as the exercise will materially build up the jumping muscles of the thighs and calves.

THE STANDING BROAD JUMP

In this event the jumper takes up his position on the take-off board with the feet abou' eighteen inches apart, the balls of the feet resting upon the board, the remainder of the fore part of the feet projecting beyond it. The feet may be worked about until a comfortable stand has been attained. Then the athlete summons all his muscular energy as the arms are drawn slowly above his head, while the body rises upon the toes and is extended upwards. The arms are next swept down and to the back, the weight resting upon the heels and the body leaning out over the pit. Now we come to the crux of the whole movement; the jumper leans forward until he feels that he must overbalance, the weight all the while resting on *the heels*, the arms are flung forward, the body straightened out, and the weight passes through from the heels to the toes by an ankling movement, and the spring is made, the flinging forward of the arms naturally tending to give the body elevation.

As the body rises the legs hang out perfectly straight, the heels are then swung up to the back. The knees are next drawn slowly up to the front as high as possible, and the body should now be at the top of its rise. The second part of the movement now ensues; the legs are shot violently out to the front, the arms forced forward, and the body depressed over the thighs to prevent the jumper falling back as he lands.

The first few times a standing long jump is attempted it will seem impossible to cram so many movements into the space of time the jump occupies, but after much practice it will be found possible to acquire the knack of executing the jump as described.

THE STANDING HIGH JUMP

WORLD'S AND U.S.A. RECORDS (5ft. 5¾ins)
Goehring, U.S.A.

OLYMPIC RECORD (5ft. 5ins.)
R. Ewry, U.S.A.

BRITISH RECORD (5ft. 2ins)
R. Ewry, U.S.A.

THE STANDING BROAD JUMP

WORLD'S RECORD (11ft. 6ins.)
R. Ewry, U.S.A, and C. Tsichtiras, Greece

BRITISH RECORD (10ft. 11¼ins.)
R Ewry, U.S.A.

U S.A. RECORD (11ft. 6ins.)
R. Ewry, U.S.A.

THE OLYMPIC RULES

THE STANDING HIGH JUMP

(*a*) The competition shall start with the bar at a height of 130cm. (ordinary competitions whatever height the competitors may mutually agree).

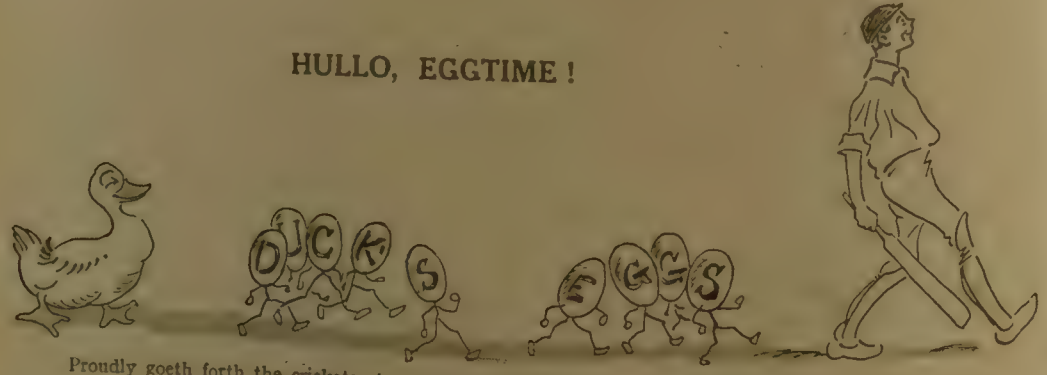
(*b*) The feet of the competitor may be placed in any position, but shall leave the ground only once in making an attempt to jump. When the feet are lifted from the ground twice or two springs are made in making the attempt, it shall count as one trial jump without result. A competitor may rock forward and backward, lifting heels and toes alternately from the ground, but may not lift either foot clear from the ground, nor more than once slide it along the ground in any direction.

(*c*) With these exceptions the rules are similar to those for the running high jump.

The rules for the standing broad jump are similar to those for the standing high jump, and, where applicable, the running broad jump.

(*Next month's article will contain valuable hints on training for track events.*)

HULLO, EGGTIME!



Proudly goeth forth the cricketer to conquer, oblivious of the fact that disaster may follow close upon his heels!

The Gentle Tapper.

By James Duncan.

Illustrated by W. F. Thomas

"Now pick that thing up," said Raitt, "and wear it in your button-hole for a week."

I

WHEN Raitt and the September term arrived together at Craythorne, and in explanation of the former's age and size it transpired that he had been formerly at Eastborough, his advent was invested with peculiar concern.

Not that Raitt was physically beautiful, nor genial, nor winning in his ways. It was hinted, on the contrary—on the authority of Lockyer Min, whose investigation had been unabashed and patient—that the new comer was a "surly, condescending beast."

His arrival was noteworthy, however; because he came from Eastborough. For at Craythorne Rugby football is pursued, while at Eastborough it is celebrated and sung. *Ergo*, by the argument of Baber, Raitt must know a thing or two of Rugger.

Baber captained the fifteen, and when he had taken an early opportunity to question Raitt, he returned to the senior class-room with the intelligence that he had more than once been tried for Eastborough last year. "Which should make him more than good enough for us," gleed Baber.

A large youth, who sat upon the table swinging a pair of noticeably thick legs, looked up at this and inquired where Raitt played.

"Where, Tapper? At right wing three-quarter," Baber told him.

"Bad luck on Vale, then—if he's good."

"If who's good—Vale?"

"No, Raitt," said Tapper, and went slouching forth.

The gentle Tapper—so called because he was the heftiest, pluckiest, and in moments of excitement the roughest forward whom the school remembered—slouched slowly down the corridor to the study which he shared with Vale. But the two shared more than common quarters. They shared confidences, they shared a certain marked distaste, bred of inability rather than of laziness, for the undue taxation of the grey matter of the brain, and they shared an amiable and mutual toleration. They shared, finally, the friendship of Maye Major, the recluse, who was popular at Craythorne for two brilliantly blue eyes, an undisputed inability to blush, and a fund of recondite and miscellaneous knowledge which could not possibly have plumbed the depths the school believed.

The gentle Tapper burst into the study.

"That new bounder!" he exclaimed.

Vale raised his eyes from the progress of the pencil wherewith Maye was indicating the false quantities in his Latin verse. Vale hated Latin verse. Maye liked it.

"You mean Raitt?" he asked. "What's he been doing?"

"Why did he come here? To Craythorne?"

"Why shouldn't he?"

"I mean—was he expelled from Eastborough?"

Tapper uttered this so viciously that Maye's blue eyes opened wide.

"Taps, sit down," he bade, "and talk some sense. Raitt's come here as an oppidan——"

"Say a day-boy and be done with it," growled Tapper.

"I prefer the proper term, Taps. The boarders here are filii; the day-boys oppidans." Maye, a stickler for the orthodox, found amusement in setting Tapper right. "Very well.

Raitt's people having come to live in Craythorne, it's natural they should send the fellow here. It needn't be for any other reason."

"I'm not so sure," said Tapper, stubbornly. "But anyhow, he's quite a nut at Rugger."

Vale knew that this was meant for him, and waited.

"And Vale, old man, he plays at wing three-quarter!"

"Which wing?"

"The right."

The cat had sprung out of its bag. Both sensed now the reason of their friend's resentment. And while Tapper proceeded to cite chapter and verse, Vale listened with a strained attention. So Raitt had been tried more than once for Eastborough. Good as the news must prove for Craythorne School, it might prove less satisfactory for Vale.

"You," said Tapper, after a short pause, "you, Vale, got your Rugger colours a month before myself."

Vale knew that he was thinking of old times.

"No, a week before, old man," he answered, smiling. "You got yours for the Keble match. I was given mine the Saturday earlier against Clare. I was lucky."

"Not you," persisted Tapper. "You jolly well deserved them. Anyhow, you and I and Baber are the only old colours in the team."

"We are," said Vale; in tones that might have been more cheerful.

The same idea was in the mind of all. So none of them pursued the subject further.

Vale harboured no delusions of his Rugger. In his most fervent moments he did not endeavour to pretend that the applause with which his play was greeted from the ropes was not inspired by personal popularity. It was a popularity he wore with diffidence and sometimes with amazement. He believed it covered a multitude of Rugger sins.

Indeed, with a candour that was part of him he had endorsed his football "character" as the magazine had published it at the end of the last season: "*F. M. Vale (three-quarter, right wing), a disappointing player, who should be better than he is. A fine tackler.*"

As soon as Vale had read this he had smiled, and owned its truth. "Why then," Maye had assured him, "you're a record!"

"A record!" Vale said, puzzled. "How?"

"For density," laughed Maye. "No, stop! You're the only man who hasn't quarrelled with his 'character' either here or anywhere else."

And Vale most likely was.

But if he estimated his football at its proper worth, the big new oppidan made no disguise of his. Raitt had not been at Craythorne for a week before the school knew all about his doings; how fast upon the field he was; what a tremendous length he kicked; of the seven tries which he scored in one house match at Eastborough. It is feared that Tapper led the sceptics who first derided this; but in the pick-up trial game, when Raitt was given Vale's place in the Probables upon the wing, scepticism was speedily subdued. Nor had a Craythorne trial ever been followed with more keenness.

For everybody knew that Vale was playing for his place. Unless he showed himself as good a man as Raitt to-day, he must assuredly, old colour though he was, give way to the new oppidan; a situation the more piquant by the sauce of emulation between oppidans and filii.

For more years than most of them recalled the oppidans had been under a comparative athletic cloud. The filii had almost farmed the places in the cricket and the football teams. To this add the consideration that Craythorne Rugger was not at a high ebb. Then what a triumph for the oppidans if one of their number should emerge from their obscurity to revive it! How much more singular the triumph in many starving minds if this champion should assert himself so far as to displace a colour and a filius of two years' standing!

The oppidans were not malicious; they were human. And Raitt, he was their sun who should disperse the darkness of their long, long night. They hailed him, and looked for him to shine.

Assuredly Raitt did shine. In the trial he was everywhere conspicuous. Although unable to repeat his performance in the Eastborough House match, he had scored twice before half-time; in addition he had dropped a noble goal. Around the ropes his fellow oppidans were hoarse.

Vale, playing at outside right three-quarter for the Possibles, crossed over now to the left wing. As captain of his side he felt he had no option but to bring himself, as the best tackler outside his scrum, *vis-à-vis* to Raitt. But this wing was unfamiliar to him; he kicked badly with his left foot; and Tapper, marking the manœuvre, growled of suicide. "The mug!" he growled. "He'll do himself less justice there than ever."

On their part the oppidans rejoiced to see Vale change. The disparity between himself and Raitt must be more patent still.

And the oppidans were right.

It was when Raitt had scored his third try, and after Vale had brought him heavily to earth while running strongly for a fourth, that as he tackled Raitt again in a *mêlée* by the "twenty-five" he surprised a look in the big oppidan's eyes which he had not seen there before. And, marking him more resolutely still, he caught again that look which had astonished him. Twice now, as he was going for him low, he observed how rapidly Raitt parted with the ball. A third time, and the pass was really flurried.

The whistle blew and found Vale pondering.

The sequel followed which he had expected. For Baber beckoned him that evening to his study, but gazed steadfastly upon a photograph as he remarked:—

"Old man, ever tried your hand at half?"

"At half?" said Vale. "No, never."

Baber paused, and plied his handkerchief. "Raitt's something classy on the right wing—what!" he murmured.

"A flyer," Vale responded. "But he——"

Vale stopped abruptly there, the colour in his cheeks. He was glad that Baber's back was turned to him. "No," he went on, rapidly, "no, I've never tried to play at half or forward. But I can try."

Baber did not seem to hear this. He turned very slowly, facing Vale.

"But Raitt—*what*?" he said.

"All right, I'll have a go at half," Vale answered.

"Raitt, what?" repeated Baber. "You were going to say?"

Vale longed perhaps that moment for the ready wit of Maye. "Oh—he kicks well," he said, lamely.

"Well"—Baber was looking excessively uncomfortable—"well, I'll try you at half next week. I can't disturb the centres. And I must play Raitt on your wing, don't you know."

"Of course you must," said Vale. "That's quite all right. So-long."

To the captain's relief, he departed on the instant. And Baber, telling Strickland that night how he had turned the awkward corner, remarked, "It was a beastly job."

"You bet it was. He took it well?"

"Oh, naturally. Vale always was a sport. But I wonder, I wonder what he was going to tell me about Raitt?"

"Oh, nothing," Strickland replied, lightly.

"The worst of it is, Strick, the poor old chap will never be an ounce of good at half."

"No earthly good, old man. Nor in the scrum."

"*Nor* in the scrum," sighed Baber.

II

Lockyer Min was something of a dandy. Season in and season out he wore a flower in his button-hole. Among the junior oppidans he set the mode.

As it turned out, however, it was unfortunate for Lockyer Min that his father had a hot-house. Scarcely otherwise could he have presented himself at school with a button-hole in November. And unless he had appeared so garnished he would not have fallen foul of Raitt.

When the ways of Lockyer Min and Raitt converged at the school gates at nine o'clock that morning, Raitt snatched at the geranium in Lockyer's coat and bade him yield it to his better. But Lockyer dodged, inquiring pertly where his better might be. Raitt's answer was a faithful promise to show him.

Inevitably the demonstration must be deferred, and Lockyer wore his flower triumphantly through morning school—with an eye upon the clock for 12.15. When that pleasant and refreshing moment came, he launched himself from his place beside the door in the manner of the greyhound loosed from leash. His face was set for home—but our analogy is topsy-turvy.

To correct it, figure Lockyer as the hare the beaters raise, and Raitt the greyhound slipped upon its track. Remember that the hound's two legs were long; his quarry's were in knickerbockers and short.

A long half-mile of lane divides the school from town, and when Raitt had caught Lockyer half-way up it he struck him, and demanded the geranium. "When you've given it to me," he said, "I'll show you who your betters are."

"Not you!" said Lockyer Min.

Raitt gripped his arm, and tugged at the red flower.

Now Lockyer fastened his button-holes with a pin, and when the pin ran promptly into his finger, Raitt threw the flower down and stamped on it. Then he sucked his finger; then he hit Lockyer very hard.

"You shut up!" cried Lockyer. "You beast!"

Raitt's answer was another blow, and an inquiry how Lockyer dare run his pins into him. He would like to know also what Lockyer meant by cheeking him that morning.

"I can't cheek you!" said Lockyer. "You're a new boy!"

Lockyer was a dude, but Lockyer had pluck. Perfectly aware that nothing would incense Raitt more than this reminder that he had no standing yet at Craythorne, he would hit hard with his tongue if he could not with his fists. Was he, the monarch of the junior school, to be bullied by this new Goliath? Lockyer was good at Scripture, and the simile quite pleased him. He was sorry he had neither sling nor stone.

Raitt had been regarding the bruised flower at his feet.

"Now," he bade—when he had smitten his small captive for the fourth time—"now, you will pick that rotten thing up——"

"Yes?"

"And you will wear it in your button-hole for a week. What's left of it."

Lockyer Min picked up the remnants and placed them tenderly in his pocket.

"You wear it!" cried Raitt again. "You wear it!"

"I shan't!"

"You put it in your button-hole, I say."

"I shan't!"

The lips of Lockyer Min were trembling, and his fists were clenched. His brow was red and swelling where Raitt had struck him. "I shan't!" he said again. "So there!"

This flat refusal was the fuel to Raitt's rage. Believing that his football prowess had set him on a pedestal among the oppidans, he found himself astoundingly defied. And his spirit was a nasty one—as Eastborough had discovered. He gripped his captive harshly by the shoulder, and steered him through a turning off the lane. "Now," he said, incisively, when he had assured himself they were not overseen, "you'll wear that flower, and you'll beg my pardon. Quick!"

Said Lockyer Min, his face as white as paper, "I'm hanged if I'll do either."

"I'll make you, then."

"You can't."

Raitt slipped his hand into his pocket, and, following the movement, Lockyer noticed for the first time that this pocket was bulging with a bulky instrument, the head of which protruded.

"Just so," Raitt said, when he saw his captive had observed it; "yes, Lockyer, that's a hammer. I borrowed it from Lee to do some joinering. It's going to come in handy."

The other listened in amazement. He could not imagine what a hammer had to do with their dispute. He had no idea how Raitt had once (and only once) performed his hammer feat at Eastborough.

In a trice Raitt's left hand had closed about his wrist. His body was jerked forward till its weight was thrown upon his outstretched arm; with a twist his elbow was turned uppermost. In this position Lockyer was helpless.

"If you wriggle," Raitt said, smoothly, "it will hurt you more. Keep still, you little skunk!"

Lockyer kept still. He wondered what came next?

"You apologise?" Raitt cried.

Lockyer was mum.

But his wonder immediately was satisfied, when the hammer descended sharply on his elbow. Once Raitt tapped; again a trifle harder; then thrice, as if he hammered in a nail. Lockyer squirmed. Raitt struck a stronger tap.

"And how do you like that?" he laughed.

His prisoner was not laughing. The pain was new, but altogether real. Though Lockyer set his teeth, a cry escaped them. Raitt asked if he would wear the flower *now*, and beg his pardon?

"Not I!" gasped Lockyer Min.

"Then I intend to hammer you on every joint. You take your choice. Which is it?"

"You beast!" groaned Lockyer Min.

Only one upshot was possible in this unequal bout. When Raitt, with a dexterity that betrayed his previous practice, had prisoned Lockyer's other arm, he applied the hammer to that elbow also. Next he turned his subject turtle, and repeated the performance on each knee.

The appearance of the subject was no longer dandified, but he did not give in. He shrieked; he kicked; he did not strike his flag.

He was on his back, thus struggling, when voices in the lane arrested Raitt. "You say a word of this," he muttered, with a quick glance of alarm in their direction, "and I'll slaughter you, young Lockyer!" Whereupon he pocketed the hammer and went swiftly.

The voices passed and died. Ten minutes later Lockyer himself emerged from the quiet turning. He had picked himself up with difficulty, and it was a slow and painful way which he pursued. But first he brushed the dust off, and crammed his cap askew over his forehead. As he turned into his father's gate, his fingers were closed proudly on the fragments of a flower.

"The beast's a funk," he muttered, pulling the cap still lower over his brow. "A funk he is. I saw it."

A cap conceals a swollen forehead so long as it surmounts it. But etiquette forbids a cap at dinner. Wherefore it befell that when Mrs. Lockyer inquired in alarm whatever her son had been doing to his head, that sore but staunch deceiver dodged her eye and murmured "Playground hockey."

"And, boy, your arm?" she cried. "You winced just now when you were passing your plate up."

"Oh, hockey sticks!" he murmured to the table-cloth.

"Those horrid sticks!" sighed she. "They're dangerous."

"They don't hurt really," answered Lockyer Min.

He did not appear in school that afternoon. In the morning, however, he was there with a fresh button-hole. And Raitt did not molest him.

III

When Vale had been tried in one match at half-back, and twice among the forwards, Baber reluctantly concluded that a square peg will not fit into a round hole. As Raitt shared this conclusion, and declined to try his skill upon the other wing—"I shan't be half so useful to you there," he urged—the inevitable ensued. Vale lost his place, but could not lose his colours. He remained that humiliating anomaly, an old colours-man outside the team.

And, naturally, Vale felt humiliated. He was conscious that the filii were sorry for him; that the sympathy of the oppidans was blinded in the glory which his brilliant supplanter had shed upon their body. For this at least Vale gave devoutful thanks. He wanted neither sympathy nor pity.

The gentle Tapper perhaps divined as much. He spoke little nowadays of football matters to Vale, the more freely to dump his opinions upon Maye.

"If I were in the old chap's place," said he, when they had the study to themselves, one day, "I'd want to slaughter that outsider, Raitt."

Maye's very blue eyes twinkled. This incensed Tapper, and he went on furiously:—

"It's beastly sickening for him—and you call yourself his friend, Maye. I don't believe you care a penny bun!"

"Oh, don't I?" Maye said, slowly.

"You don't show it."

"Nor does Vale. Why should we?"

"Eh?"

"Look here," said Maye. "Old Taps, you're a great ass. Raitt's quite the better of the two. Then what more do you want?"

Tapper took him up immediately. "To see Vale in his place again," he cried. "Maye, if you played, you'd understand. There am I, plugging my heart out in the scrum—and old Vale on the touch-line with a flag. It's ghastly!"

"Yes," Maye answered, quietly; "I understand."

"Besides," continued Tapper, "that Raitt chap isn't wholesome. If it wasn't for his footer the oppidans would admit it. A lot of them are fed up with him already. I know, Maye. I hear things.

"And so do I," said Maye.

"Very well, then. Why did he leave Eastborough? Oh, beat about the bush as much as you like, but I tell you if a decent sort had hoofed Vale out I'd stand it. But a swine like that!"

The gentle Tapper hunched two truculent shoulders. He looked exceedingly ungentle.

"When you've quite done scowling at me," Maye observed, "there's something else I want to tell you. Baber's leaving us at Christmas."

"He is?" cried Tapper. "Baber leaving?"

"Precisely. And somebody must skipper the fifteen next term."

To Maye's astonishment the answer was a laugh of joy. "Good biz!" it rang. "Old Vale's the senior colour!"

"Are you and Vale and Baber the only three with colours?"

"*And* Raitt," admitted Tapper, very sourly. "Baber gave him his last Wednesday."

"Then, Tapper, you'll have to succeed Baber, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless—no, never mind. You're senior colour. You'll be bound to skipper."

"Vale's senior colour," Tapper answered, stoutly.

"But Vale has lost his place. He can't be skipper."

"No more can I, then. I've no brains for skippering. It's a gift, Maye."

"I thought I heard you say once——"

"Oh, dry up!" Tapper shouted, wrathfully. "I tell you, man, I don't know how to skipper—I don't, really."

For some moments Maye watched him, retaining a queer silence. "Well, I shouldn't wonder," he said, rather grimly, "if the oppidans didn't settle the matter for us. The

circumstances are not exactly normal. And, after all, Raitt comes from a celebrated Rugger school."

Tapper looked at sea. "Say that again," he growled.

"You think it out," smiled Maye. "The oppidans have been out in the cold too long. It's reasonable they should snatch at a chunk of honour—when they've earned it."

The mouth of the gentle one opened. Then it closed again. Then he stared at Maye incredulously.

"You don't suppose they'd have the cheek!" he cried.

"To put Raitt up for captain? Yes, I do. I hear they've sounded Crumbs about it."

"What's he to do with it, at any rate?"

"He's got a say as games master."

"I'm hanged if I can see it," Tapper growled.

"Then stick up for your own claim," Maye retorted.

"My claim!" cried Tapper. "Rot!" And there he ceased.

If either of them reverted to the subject it was not before excitement had been raised by word that the oppidans had challenged the filii to a Rugger match. On this came tidings that the challenge was accepted. It subsequently leaked out that Baber had first laughed at the idea; whereupon the oppidans had countered by declaring that the match had always figured in the old days (before the era of filii supremacy), and that its renewal would be only in accordance with tradition. An appeal to Maye—that mole who burrowed in past history—clinched this contention; so that Baber gave assent, and Maye went off to find the gentle Tapper.

Maye was smiling when he found his friend. Tapper was smiling when they parted. "You're sure?" he murmured. "Dead certain," was the answer. "Why, then, old man, we must——

"We must," Maye cut him short.

As the day for the big match approached (a week before the end of term) these twin confederates had much to commune of it, but never, by strange chance, in Vale's hearing. And each time Maye remarked "We must," Tapper would shrug his shoulders, asking, "How?" Till fate stepped in, and brought him Lockyer Min.

It was quite by accident that Tapper came on Lockyer Min, what time the dandy struggled with equations in detention. As Tapper's heart was sounder than his arithmetic he assisted Lockyer to some erroneous solutions; and was astonished when the infant, timidity effaced by gratitude, inquired if the filii had any chance in the great match?

"What makes you ask?" said Tapper in amusement.

"Because, please, the oppidans are saying that we're going to whop you. Raitt will beat you by himself, they say."

"Well, you're an oppidan. You ought to hope he will," laughed Tapper.

Lockyer was fingering the flower in his button-hole. "I don't," he blurted suddenly, beneath his breath. "I hope you'll lick us hollow."

Tapper laughed again. "You are," he said, "a—little—unpatriotic—sweep!"

"And Raitt's a beastly funk," glowered Lockyer.

"Indeed!" said Tapper with some sarcasm. "And how do *you* know?"

"It doesn't matter," was the quick response. "Raitt is a funk. I know it."

Tapper eyed him queerly, with a new regard. Then he rose, and slouched off on his way, with very little to remark to anyone until that night, when, quite *apropos* of nothing, he suddenly observed to Maye, "I have it!"

"Have what?" Maye asked him, startled.

With emphasis Tapper replied, "*How!*"

To assert that the oppidans wore swollen heads at this time is to do injustice to their natural delight. In restoring the match against the filii to its place in the due order of things they had so far restored their prestige. In producing a candidate for the captaincy of the fifteen they had gone farther. The victory they might reasonably anticipate would be the apex of their pyramid.

It was conceded in Craythorne that Raitt, if he secured this triumph for his clan, would deserve to succeed Baber. If the oppidans quite possibly objected to his person, they were ready to accept him as the vindicator of their name. *Aut Raitt aut nullus!* They plumped, of course, for Raitt.

He himself had no doubt of the issue. Win or lose, he would captain the fifteen. But it displeased him to be scowled upon whenever he met Tapper.

He was flattered, however, when he chanced to overhear the latter passing comment on the coming match. For the word or two he caught was this, "Raitt's bound to be too good for us."

Tapper, as it happened, was conversing with three of the school forwards. All of them were filii. But Tapper and his company were talking

in the inner room of the tuck-shop, and Raitt had no business at all in the tiny store-room that adjoined it. It was a nook, however, which he favoured often. It was safer than his own home for the stealthy cigarette.

From the sequel, two inferences might be drawn. First, that Tapper imagined none could overhear him. Second, that Raitt neglected to undeceive him through sheer astonishment to find a proverb falsified.

Listeners, then, could hear some good of themselves!

Each of these conclusions might be inferred. But conclusions are dangerous hurdles to leap.

The fact remains that Tapper spoke of Raitt. The fact remains that Raitt sat still and listened.

"He's bound to be too good for us," reiterated Tapper. His back was squarely to the store-room door: his tones lugubrious but penetrating.

"But we'll have five of the school forwards. They'll only have three." This from someone whose voice resembled Lee's.

"And there won't be much to choose between the halves," urged Sawdy.

"No," said Tapper, "nothing. Or a trifle in their favour." Then, vehemently, as he thumped his hand upon the table, "I'd risk a lot, you men, to win that match. I would!"

Smith chimed in now. "I fancy most of us would give our boots for it."

Tapper scratched his chin, and seemed to ruminate. From the silence, at least, Raitt judged that he was ruminating. Till presently his voice rose loud again. "Bar Raitt, it would be a gift for us. Now what?"

A derisive laugh responded. In his hiding, Raitt dropped the cigarette he dared not light. He was smiling lightly.

"Of course!" Lee answered.

"But Raitt must play," cried Sawdy.

As he staggered up it was seen that his left arm dangled limply, and his right hand clutched his shoulder. "My collar bone, I think," he gasped.

"It's his benefit match, you might say," observed Smith.

There was nothing cautious in Tapper's gruff reply. "Then I'm going to play on to Raitt," said he. "For all I'm worth I am. I mean to bottle him."

"The gentle Tapper!" Lee exclaimed, excitedly. "You're going to show Raitt what

the name means, eh? My word! D'ye remember, you men, that game against the garrison? The Tommies thought they knew their way about——"

"Until our gentle one," cried Sawdy, "took them on at their own game. He crumpled them! Great Scott!"

"Yes, I'm going to gentle-Tapper him," said Tapper, grinning. "I'll shake him into fits. And you've all got to help."

It was at this moment that the eavesdropper well-nigh declared himself. He had all but done so when he remembered in the very nick of time that Tapper was more than a rough forward. In short, that Tapper was a prefect. And that cigarettes in store-rooms tax invention.

Tapper continued, audibly and firmly. "You men have got to do your whack. It's astonishing how easily a collar-bone will snap!"

A collar-bone! Raitt's lips were slightly parted. Was it really "collar-bone" that Tapper said?

"They snap before you look at them. Just grab at a chap's shoulder"—Tapper laid a mighty paw on Lee—"like that, you know. And click! The bone's in two."

"In two," repeated Sawdy. "*Phut!* Like that!"

"But you don't mean——"

"I do," said Tapper, grimly. What need to sink his voice? How should he know that the store-room had a tenant? "I do, indeed."

"You're going to play on Raitt, and smash his collar-bone."

"The first earthly chance I get after the kick-off."

"And we're to back you up?"

"You have. All four of us have got to lay Raitt out. Now then, is it a pledge?"

"To break his collar-bone?"

"To break his collar-bone," said Tapper. "Are you on?"

"Count me," said Sawdy, smoothly.

"And me," Lee murmured.

"And me," came in the deep bass of Smith.

Tapper rose. The three rose. They moved the little table back. "Then *that*," Tapper was saying, "will settle Raitt. But we must never give this little plan away. It's got to seem a *bona-fide* accident. Keep mum."

They sauntered forth, for half-past four was striking, which brought Jim, the tuckman, and the formal "opening of the shop." But several minutes had elapsed before a lithe, long form, having first assured itself that no prefect had come in, emerged from its obscurity. As he brushed out of the doorway, Raitt was looking worried.

His worried air accompanied him homewards. And yet he felt one potent cause for gratitude.

He was grateful for the little habit which had taken him before the tucker opened to that nook. What a slice of luck that Tapper did not know of it!

There gratitude deserted Raitt. His thoughts were apprehensive.

So the brutes meant to break his collar-bone! The hounds!

But were they quite so sure they had him after all? Two could play at that game, gentle Tapper!

Here he proved unable to persuade himself that the collar-bones of Tapper, and of Sawdy, Lee, and Smith could be dislocated neatly by himself. Yet he dwelt upon the fancy, for it pleased him. He dismissed it with reluctance.

But—suppose they *did* break his? He had read somewhere that broken collar-bones hurt horribly. Besides, if Tapper broke a collar-bone he would stop at nothing but a compound fracture, and that meant months and months before it mended. A man with a compound fracture couldn't skipper the fifteen.

Was it worth it, for a little game like that? Nothing was at stake on the result, except some silly sentiment. (To Raitt, all sentiment was "silly.")

When he reached home at last he was reiterating caustically that his skin came before the oppidans, and that two could play at Tapper's game. To his mind, there were more ways than one of playing it.

IV

Behold Mr. Cromb with the whistle at his lips. Behold the filii and oppidans about to join in battle. Mark Vale's eyes sparkle, in his old place on the wing. Lo! Raitt, where he prances.

Raitt had suggested in the morning to Baber that as rivalry was running high it might be more gracious if he took no part. He was ready, he insisted, to stand down. He was a new comer; his football had not been learned at Craythorne; he was rather better (this urged with modesty) than most; if they fought it out without him soreness might be avoided. He would be quite happy to touch-judge.

Baber had laughed and replied that Raitt was too thin-skinned. He declared, however, that he understood Raitt's feelings. (One may wonder if he did.)

The battle joined, Tapper kicked off straight and high to Raitt. With Sawdy, Lee, and Smith upon his heels he galloped after the ball.

Raitt caught it, dodged Tapper, and punted nicely down the field. When one of the filii three-quarters had mulled it, Taylor, scrum-half of the oppidans, dribbled on. There was a *mêlée* on the line, a vocal tornado round the ropes—and in two minutes the oppidans had scored. Raitt was smiling as he placed a pretty goal. (But behind the goal-posts a small figure, with a flower in its button-hole, looked sad.)

Again Tapper kicked off: again at his enemy's right wing; again with his conspirators he hurled himself in pursuit. This time he collared Raitt, at the instant that the latter screwed to touch. Tapper loosed his grip reluctantly, and scowling. "When I can," the scowl said, "I'll smash you into bits." At least, Raitt read it so.

In the twenty ding-dong minutes that ensued Tapper and his forwards played persistently on Raitt. "The right game, too," the critics commented, "for if they keep him quiet they'll win." But the critics were not near enough to watch Raitt's eyes.

Shortly before half-time Taylor dodged round the blind side of a scrum in the filii twenty-five, and wriggled over the line. This try was converted also, and the whistle blew with oppidan hopes high. There is no better tonic than a ten-point lead.

The antagonists sucked lemons, and withdrew into groups. One of these groups was comprised of Lee and Sawdy, Smith and Tapper. Watching them covertly, Raitt fancied that he caught his name. "Now—straight-away," he heard them tell each other.

It was noticed at the start again that the hero of the oppidans seemed unable to retain the ball. Chance after chance he muffed, with the gentle Tapper always at his heels. Raitt was exploiting seemingly a new theory of passing, and when he failed to pass he kicked towards touch. Many of his passes were precipitate and wild. Many of his kicks were feeble.

Then Baber slung out wide to Vale, who took the pass cleanly, and scored near touch-in-goal. Far out as it was, the gentle Tapper booted a great goal.

A change was coming over the game now. The more assiduously his halves and centres fed him, the more distrustful Raitt grew of his pace. At this stage the smile transferred itself from his lips to those of the small dude behind the goal-posts. "He's funking it!" commented that staunch hater.

Just afterwards the catastrophe occurred. Sawdy and Tapper had jointly collared Raitt, and a sharp cry escaped him as he fell. When they rose he lay still and groaning. It was seen as he staggered to his feet that his right arm dangled limply. His left hand hugged his shoulder.

"My collar-bone—I think," he gasped.

"Hurt badly? You're quite sure?" Mr. Newberry had dashed through to the rescue.

"I felt it—snap," Raitt murmured.

"Ah! let me see, boy."

But the sufferer repulsed him. "Ugh! Don't touch it—please—not yet," he managed to articulate, while eager feet were hurrying for his wraps. "Yes—thank you, sir," and, supported by the master, he tottered his way off.

Despite this cruel blow, the depleted oppidans fought gamely, and it was not until five minutes before time that Strickland scored beneath the posts, for Exell Max to convert and make things level. But long before this happened Mr. Newberry had returned. He looked puzzled and preoccupied, and answered all inquiries with acidity.

When the teams met afterwards, for the special tea which was to commemorate the match, it was admitted by the fillii that the luck had all been theirs. And that reminded them—how did it go with Raitt? Was he in the infirmary? Had anyone been up there to ask after him?

All eyes turned naturally to Tapper here. And when it appeared that their gentle one had not troubled himself to inquire, most eyes glanced reproof. Such callousness!

"Well—after tea," said Baber, beginning to pour out.

But that banquet and its sequel is remembered still at Craythorne. For Baber had not filled the cups before the injured man himself appeared, clothed in a grey suit, condescension, and assurance. He was smiling slyly when Maye—present by virtue of the flag that he had waved on touch—made room for him.

"But we thought——" cried Baber, in amazement.

"No doubt," Raitt answered, airily. "I meant that you should think so. There are more ways than one of playing Tapper's game." He had risen, and, chaining their attention, he told them of the plot that he had overheard. He did not add what took him to the store-room.

"So I shammed that they *had* smashed me," he concluded. "I think I scored."

The table was one gasp at Tapper's shame. The heads of the conspirators should be dropping in confusion. But Tapper grinned—he positively grinned.

"You're sure I meant to break your collar-bone?" laughed he.

"I heard you plan it, as I've said. You, Lee, Smith, and Sawdy," answered Raitt.

"One minute." The accused had risen in his turn. "I'll tell you men the truth. I did plot against Raitt."

"Oh, shame!" cried Taylor, in sepulchral tones.

"I knew," continued Tapper, "that Raitt often sneaked off to that store-room. I knew"—significantly—"why. I knew, too, that he was, and is, a funk."

Taylor protested again here, and Exell was seconding the protest, when Baber stilled them. "Let him go on," said he, glancing curiously at Vale.

Tapper required no sanction to "go on."

"So I laid a trap for Raitt. The four of us made sure that he was there, then in we went, and jawed about laying him out. We jawed just loud enough for him to hear us. If he *was* a funk, you see, we knew we'd frighten the play out of him. If he wasn't—there was no harm done."

"Quite so," Maye put in quietly. "None of you played really roughly in the match?"

"Not one of us," grinned Tapper. "Baber, just open that envelope I gave you before the start."

The scene was exciting and dramatic. But when Baber, with an assurance that he had no idea of its contents, produced an envelope and found therein the details of Tapper's plot set forth in the gentle one's own scrawl, drama veered to comedy. But the comedy was not at Tapper's expense.

Maye's blue eyes were twinkling as he seized the chance he waited.

"The event," he cried, "shows whether Tapper was right. Would Raitt have shammed like that—unless he was a funk?"

The uncomfortable silence was first broken by Baber.

"Vale," he said, "at the beginning of the term, that night I told you you must drop out for Raitt, you were beginning to say something about Raitt, and stopped yourself. What was it?"

"Oh, nothing," murmured Vale.

"Was it that he funked? You remember—you'd just been playing against him."

"Oh, never mind," Vale answered.

But the impetuous Tapper meant justice to be done. "Of course it was," he cried. "Vale almost said as much to me, but wouldn't. Vale plays the game, and he wouldn't accuse a man who'd stepped into his shoes of funking. But the bounder wasn't in my shoes, thank goodness! I've proved he funks."

He faced them defiantly, challenging contradiction. And while he stood there Raitt rose, and stole out of the room. No voice was raised to call him back.

But the last card was played by Maye.

"I'll tell you," he said, suavely, "why Tapper was so keen on keeping Raitt out. I discovered and told him long ago what you're going to learn now. It was always the custom, when the oppidans and filii used to play each other annually, for the senior colour of the winners to be skipper the next season. Since we revived the match, we must survive the custom too. Baber goes at Christmas. If the oppidans had beaten us, Raitt would have had to succeed him. As it is, the senior filii colour will——"

"But the filii," cried Taylor, "didn't win!"

"Nor did the oppidans," smiled Maye.

"And who wants Raitt—a funk like that?" expostulated Exell.

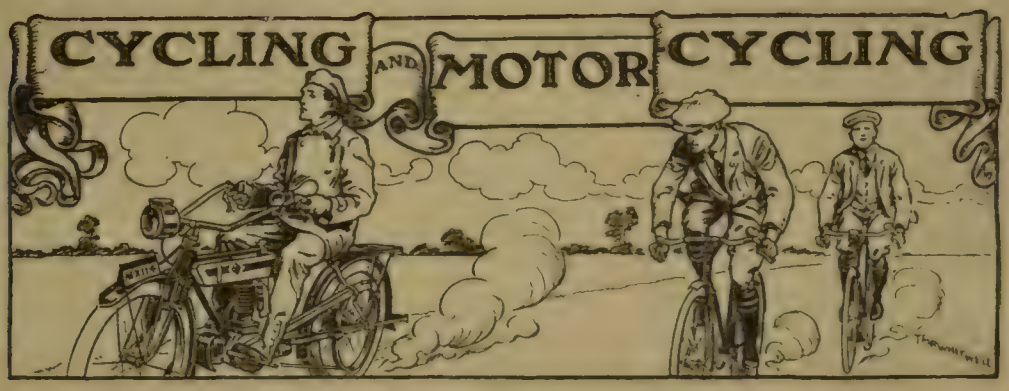
"Not I," said Taylor, grimly.

While this sentiment was hailed, the gentle Tapper thumped his fist upon the table. "Vale's senior colour," he declared, exultingly. "Vale skippers us next term. That's certain."

* * * * *

But history shows that Vale refused the honour. Willy-nilly, brains or no brains, it was thrust upon a certain Tapper. There is no record of a Raitt in his fifteen.

Raitt may—perhaps—have repeated his smart hammer trick. And gone accordingly from Craythorne. Who knows?



By ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

Editor of "Engineering Wonders of the World." Author of "How it Works," etc.

MENDING A LONG CUT IN AN INNER TUBE

IF an inner tube gets a long gash made in it by a cover lifter, or through sticking to the cover and tearing when dragged out, the case may appear rather desperate. But, provided that the cut be not a spiral one, a satisfactory mend is effected without much difficulty. Begin by cleaning the rubber carefully to a distance of ¾in. from the cut in all directions. Turn up one long lip of the cut and clean that too. Then solution the top of one edge, and the bottom side of the other, and, when the tacky stage is reached, draw the second over the first so that there is an overlap of about ⅛in., and lay the tube aside until the rubber is quite dry inside. Next cut out a piece of sheet rubber 1in. longer than the gash, and 1in. wider—or wider if the gash is of irregular shape. Give patch and tube a coating of solution, allow that to dry and add a second. While this is drying, procure two pieces of flat wood considerably larger than the patch, and some pieces of soft material—cloth or old flannel, for instance—to make a pad. Put the patch in place on the tube, squeezing it down with the thumbs until all air is expelled, lay the soft pad on the patch, and one piece of wood on the pad. The other piece of wood is applied to the opposite side of the tube, and the whole is bound round tightly with string, or, what is much better, clamped between the jaws of a vice. If the solutioning of the rubber surfaces was done properly you will get a perfectly airtight joint.

LEAKY INFLATORS

The efficiency of an inflator depends entirely on the condition of the cup leather fixed to the front side of the piston, which is merely a support for the leather and is purposely a loose fit to allow air to pass. If the leather gets worn away on one side by friction, an air-leak will develop; and the only remedy is to fit a new leather, which may be purchased at any cycle shop for a penny. Unscrew the collar at the top of the inflator, pull out the piston, and remove the central screw which holds the leather in place. Should there be under the screw-head a metal washer to keep the central part of the cup flat, be careful to replace this. The cup will last longer and do its work better if made quite supple by a soaking in melted mutton fat or tallow. When putting the plunger back into the barrel take care that

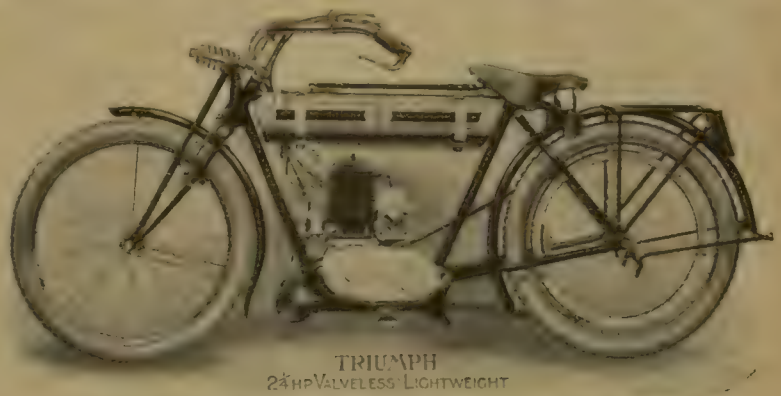


FIG. 1.—The Triumph Lightweight Motor-Cycle. This has a 2¾ h.p. two-stroke valveless engine, and a two-speed gear.

the edge of the cup does not turn up and get pinched between barrel and piston.

When pumping make vigorous strokes. A stiff cup may lie away from the barrel, and quick compression is needed to make it expand. A pump which won't work at all if treated gently may act well enough if the above bit of advice be followed.

Imperfect cup leathers apart, the labour of

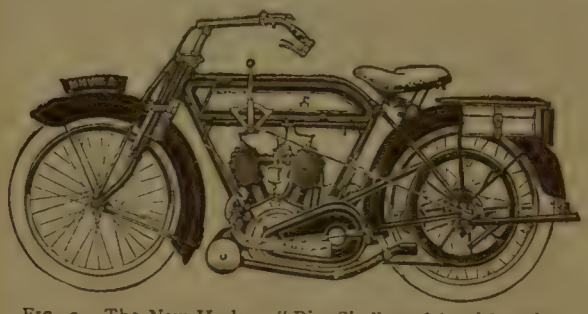


FIG. 2.—The New Hudson "Big Six" model, with twin-cylinder engine and three-speed gear.

inflating a tyre is greatly increased by imperfect joints between nozzle and valve, between pump and the nipple of the connection, and between the flexible tubing and the nozzle and nipple. The nozzle should have in it a tiny leather washer for the point of the valve to bed against. If this has fallen out, put one in; spare washers are generally included in a repairing outfit. The joint between pump and connection depends for tightness on another washer outside the part which screws in. This, too, wants looking after.

TENDENCIES IN DESIGN OF MOTOR-CYCLES

The motor-cycle retains its hold on the interest of people who like mechanics, because it is always being improved. Externally, the motor-cycle of one year may look very much like that of the preceding year. But the critical observer will detect variations, slight, maybe, but all in the direction of getting rid of defects and producing a machine which is economical to run, and gives little or no trouble.

The general adoption of the change-speed gear is now a fact. A couple of years back only a few firms had made serious efforts to apply it to the motor-cycle. The side-car, however, left no alternative open, and now every maker fits two-speed, or in many cases three-speed gears, with clutch and free-engine positions. The advantages conferred by such gears had caused them to be fitted even to small light-weights which will never be called upon to do more than move themselves and their riders.

The side-car has also done a lot towards ousting the belt in favour of the more rigid chain drive. Some makers have compromised with a two-stage drive, the first by chain from engine to counter-shaft—whereon is mounted the gear-changing mechanism—the second by belt from the counter-shaft to the road wheel. I venture to prophesy that in a few years both belt and chain will have disappeared and the enclosed shaft have replaced them, as has happened in the case of motor-cars. A few machines have already adopted the shaft—in conjunction with clutch and change-speed gear—most successfully; and we shall see it gain popularity fast, unless I am much mistaken.

THE NEW LIGHT-WEIGHTS

Among the most interesting features of the last cycle show at Olympia were the light motor-cycles fitted with a two-stroke engine. For the benefit of readers whose knowledge of the principles of internal combustion engines is still a bit imperfect, let me explain that the ordinary motor-car or motor-cycle engine works on the four-stroke principle; that is, a piston exerts a turning effort on the crank-shaft once only during four movements. In the two-stroke engine, on the other hand, the piston drives the crank *every* time it moves towards the crank-shaft. It is obvious that, given two engines with single cylinders of equal bore and stroke, a two-stroke should develop twice as much power as the four-stroke, theoretically at least, and be particularly well suited for a machine which shall have a low total weight. Consequently, we now find small-

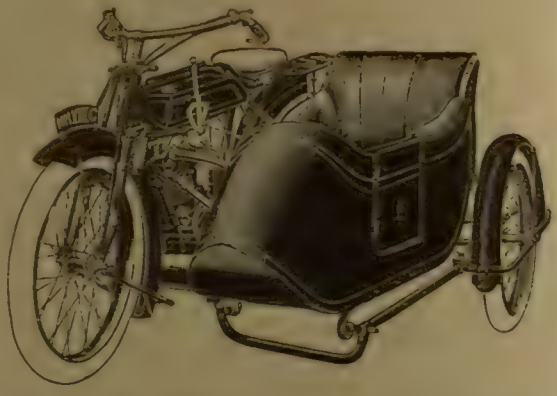


FIG. 3.—The New Hudson 6 h.p. motor-cycle, with side-car attached.

cylinder air-cooled engines working on the two-stroke principle coming into favour; and doubtless larger ones will be used when the difficulty of cooling them has been overcome.

Apart from small size and lightness, the two-stroke engine scores by having no moving valves, but merely ports in the cylinder which are covered and uncovered by the piston as

it moves. This is a very strong point in its favour, since greater simplicity is what we are all looking for.

THE TRIUMPH LIGHT-WEIGHT

of 2¼ horse-power is a beautiful little machine, splendidly made throughout, as anyone who has had anything to do with Triumph machines will take for granted. The engine has a compression release valve to make starting easy, and a large outside heavy-rimmed flywheel, which is a much better storer of energy than an equally massive wheel of smaller diameter. The mixture is drawn from the carburetter into the crank-case, while the piston travels upwards, and the previous charge is compressed and ignited. Towards the end of the return stroke the piston uncovers an exhaust port to release the burnt gases, and, almost simultaneously, another port through which the fresh charge—slightly compressed in the crank-case by the descent of the piston—enters the cylinder, to be in turn compressed and exploded.

The crank-shaft drives, by means of a chain, a counter-shaft two-speed gear, whence the drive is passed on by belt to the rear-wheel. Owing to there being two stages, the counter-shaft belt pulley can be made large enough to do away with all slip. The gears are enclosed in a dustproof cover, and are controlled from the handlebar. So confident are the makers in the good running of their engine that they have abolished the pedals, which have hitherto been considered a desirable auxiliary in a machine light enough to be assisted by the feet. When fully equipped with petrol and oil this model weighs a little over a hundredweight (Fig. 1).

LUBRICATION OF TWO-STROKE ENGINES

An interesting point about "two-strokes" is the method of lubrication used. It is about as simple as can be. Oil is mixed with the petrol—by means of a tiny measure—in the proportions of 1 : 16, and drawn with it through the carburetter into the crank-case, where sufficient is deposited to lubricate the main bearings, piston-rod ends, and cylinder. This system, which works well in practice, is perfectly automatic, as oil is supplied only when the engine is running, and then in strict proportion to the amount of petrol being used and the amount of power being developed. It would not, of course, serve in the four-stroke engine which draws its charges direct into the cylinder, and has valves which might be affected by an oily deposit.

HIGH-POWERED MACHINES

In spite of the growing popularity of the small car and cycle-car, the side-car and motor-cycle combination more than holds its own. So far as my own observation goes, the side-car seems to be establishing itself as a more or less permanent accessory of the powerful machine, either because users find it too troublesome to detach, or on account of the extra stability that it confers, especially when roads are greasy. So that, though makers are well aware of the great future of the light "solo," they are equally alive to the demand for the hefty load-puller which will take a side-car and passenger anywhere, and are giving much attention to the twin and four-cylinder engine developing 5 horse-power and upwards. Among recent additions to the ranks of the "twin" is the 6 horse-power New Hudson, fitted with the three-speed hub gear (Armstrong) which the firm has adopted for all their machines. The chain driving the counter-shaft is completely enclosed to keep dust out and sound in A very good feature is the brazing into the frame of lugs to take the bolts which connect on the side-car (Figs. 2 and 3).

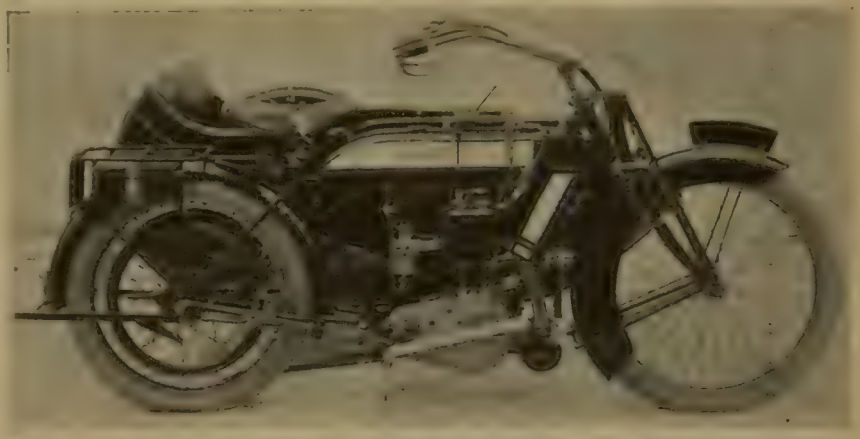


FIG. 4.—The 3½ h.p. Humber, with water-cooled cylinder. The honeycomb radiator is seen on the inside of the front tube of the frame.

A NEW WATER-COOLED ENGINE

The high-powered, air-cooled engine has so much reserve force in hand that it can take a stiff hill without the gear being dropped; or, if a change to low gear be preferred, will run with so little mixture that overheating is

avoided. A medium-powered engine which has to be fairly well pushed even on low gear to get through its work will naturally heat up if dependent on air-cooling, because the air current is too slow to carry off the excess heat. Messrs. Humber now list a 3½ horse-power machine, with a single-cylinder *water*-cooled engine. A honeycomb radiator, holding three quarts of water, is mounted on the inside of the front tube of the frame, as shown in Fig. 4. The water-cooling makes all the difference, as it allows the engine to be run at full power indefinitely, and therefore make full use of changes of gear. And surely, under these conditions, 3½ horse-power ought to be good enough for a 3cwt. combination. Not so very many years ago I used to drive a 9cwt. four-seated car which boasted only 3½ horse-power, but would bowl along merrily enough on the flat with full load—though certainly very slow on hills. With the total weight reduced by 6 to 7 cwt. and the gears suitably raised, that car would have been a "flyer," I imagine.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING FOR MOTOR-CYCLES

Enterprising motor-cycle makers evidently don't mean to get left behind by manufacturers of motor-cars in the adoption of new ideas. Hardly has the lighting outfit with engine-operated dynamo come into vogue for the four-wheeler when we find it being applied on a suitably smaller scale to the two-wheeler. The "Indian" machine has a little dynamo driven off the engine-shaft. This delivers current to an accumulator through an automatic switch which prevents overcharging. The head-lamp draws its current from the accumulator. By an ingenious arrangement the electric lighting equipment is made to serve another purpose—starting the engine. The rider, seated in his saddle, raises the exhaust-valve lifter, which frees a pedal on the motor-case. When this is depressed, current flows from the accumulator to the dynamo, which now acts as a motor, and turns the engine. As soon as the engine begins to fire, the pedal is raised and the motor becomes a dynamo again.

These refinements mean complication to which the average rider may object. But electric lighting has very decided advantages over the acetylene system, and is well worth a trial even in its simplest form—a dynamo delivering current direct to the head-lamp. One can buy special dynamos designed for being driven off the wheel-rim of a cycle, and head-lamps to match. The intensity of the light necessarily varies with the speed, but this fact is not much of a drawback in practice, provided that the lamp shows up the road fairly well at twelve miles an hour. I have tried the direct method on a car, and find it quite satisfactory; and I don't see why it should not serve the motor-cyclist equally well, at any rate as a stand-by or for short runs. Dynamo and lamp weigh much less than an acetylene generator and projector. When light is not needed, the dynamo is drawn out of contact with the wheel, and therefore absorbs none of the engine's driving-power.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE BICYCLE

EXPERIMENTERS were working on the bicycle idea before the days of either your grandfather or your great-grandfather. Nearly two centuries have elapsed since the discovery of the laws of motion which enable the rider to keep a two-wheel machine in an upright position while moving.

In 1779 the members of the French Academy in the Place de la Concorde were astonished to see the first crude two-wheel machine to be propelled by human power. It was not until 1818, however, that Baron von Drais brought out a machine called the "Draisienne," the front wheel of which was capable of being steered. Two Scotchmen, McMillan and Dalzell, made valuable improvements in the machine between 1834 and 1847, but Ernest Michaux, a French locksmith, was (in 1855) the first to apply the crank system to the front wheel. In 1869, M. Magee, a Parisian, made a "Velocipede" entirely of iron and steel, and in the same year rubber tyres were used.

During the next few decades all sorts of machines were produced, all heavy, clumsy, hard-running, and utterly worthless as far as practical use was concerned, but each a little better than its predecessor.

Finally, within our own recall, came the old high wheel kind, or "Ordinary," as it was called. Some had little wheels behind, others in front. Some had cranks, some levers, while others had cog-wheels, springs, straps, ratchets, and what not. It took an acrobat or gymnast to ride one of these "bone-shakers" or "head-smashers," as they were called.

Now, however, thanks to modern machinery and invention, we have the present safety bicycle, a thing of beautiful lines and resilient pneumatic tyres. It has been obliged, in order to reach its present state of perfection, to overcome almost insurmountable difficulties for nearly two hundred years; but it has become a recognised institution all over the civilised world.

L. H. BRADSHAW.

TAKING THE BISCUIT

A Boat-Race Story

By HYLTON CLEAVER

CHAPTER I

PEOPLE finding a dog with a bad name are content, as a rule, to see that it sticks to him; they do not trouble to find out how or why he secured it; and although this is possibly because life is too short, it is a sad business, since more often than not the name is undeserved—as it was in the case of Daniel Oscar Morton. Unfortunately, Daniel was the youngest of a series of brothers, assorted in size and age, but standardised in regard to oarsmanship.

Paterfamilias Morton had been a Cambridge Blue, and had rowed twice in the 'Varsity race. As soon, therefore, as the first-born of his sons was sufficiently old, he was taught to appreciate the difference between an oar and a scull; and later, between rowing and boating. Later still he went to Welbridge, and rowed for his school at Henley; and so, when at last he went up to Cambridge, they set him to stroke a trial eight, and finally the crew, where he remained for three years, stroking in each case—as had his father. There were so many young Mortons of this kidney that the name soon became historic on the river. Boathouse chats into which Fairbairns, Stuarts, Swanns, and such were introduced were not complete without eulogistic reference to the Morton family. In turn each of three Mortons followed in their father's footsteps; one rowed twice, the others three times; all were offered seats in the Leander eight at Henley from time to time.

Then at last, when folk thought that the last of the Mortons had indeed come and gone, Daniel turned up. It has already been pointed out that he was unfor unate. For one thing he had a father and three bro hers who intended that he should row, and row exceedingly well, and, since no man is a prophet in his own country, these four hammered into Daniel from time to time the fact that in their considered and universal opinions he rowed very badly. As a matter of fact, this was not so. He rowed well; but a man with hordes of champion oarsmen buzzing round him does not expect unstinted praise; or, if he does, he fails to get it.

Daniel grew eventually to feel that he really did row badly, and was surprised to find himself in the Welbridge crew. He was, however, an almost too modest youth, and did not hesitate to tell all whom it interested that the opinion of his family was that he was no oarsman, and a great disappointment to them. Folk took notice of this. Surely, they argued, the Morton family must know, if anyone did. And so they wandered down to the river and watched Daniel. Themselves, they could see nothing wrong; all was, in fact, good, and as it should be. Where, thought they, was Daniel lacking? Ah, they had it—he *could not last*; he had style, but no stamina; he was likely to crack. Yes, that was it; and the Mortons *en famille* had found it out. Then they wandered away again, shaking their heads and gesticulating with slow, sad movements, to report that Daniel was "weak in the middle." Oh, *they* had noticed it. Yes, he appeared to be working, but *was* not. (Raised eyes, and so forth.)

This stone, started on the roll, gathered much moss. Within a short time it was an accepted fact at Welbridge that all the Mortons had definitely stated that Daniel could not last in a race of any length. That is how, in many cases, a dog receives his bad name.

They kept Daniel in the Welbridge eight because of his style and his name; and to all appearances he fully upheld the family honour. But folk would not believe it—no, *he appeared to be working, but was not.* No coach is thought anything of who will not occasionally denounce some oarsman or other with this cryptic remark.

So Daniel went up to Cambridge with his bad name, and there he found, amongst others, one Halliford, a man who had left Welbridge a year before. Halliford was a man of the firebrand kind. Make trouble, but don't spill it

over yourself, was his motto. As a small boy he had delighted in practical jokes, repeatedly gaining disfavour in the eyes of perfectly dear old uncles by calling attention to the similarity of their ties to telescopes, since they pulled out. Practising this jest one day at school upon Daniel, usually a quiet and retiring youth, he had received a stinging blow in the eye. The tie Daniel was wearing at the time was, as it happened, one recently made for him by his sister Muriel, his great pal in the home circle, and was therefore a moderately sacred article. Since then Halliford had always regarded Daniel as a sworn enemy—for which, by the way, there was also another reason. When, therefore, he found him at Cambridge, and actually in his own college, he sat up and took an interest in things—disliking Daniel as he would a small globule of mud.

They set Daniel to stroke a trial eight, and various members of the Morton family then came up to Cambridge, and told him how very poorly he shaped, asking him to mend his ways; and Daniel, being unassuming and sensitive, tried hard to do so, gleaning some comfort the while from the contents of periodical letters from Muriel telling him how well she thought he was showing up.

Halliford himself was rowing in the other trial eight at the time, and throughout their practice consoled the members of his crew with definite statements that Daniel was in reality a confirmed slacker; that even the Mortons had said so, that it had been proved at Welbridge (which it had not), and that he was glad not to be in his crew. And this, coming as it did from such a reliable source, and from the mouth of an actual schoolmate, was regarded as definite, and soon reached the ears of McInt[illegible] President of the C.U.B.C., who thereafter watched Daniel closely, and, after a while, by the force of suggestion he began to think that he *could* distinguish a certain lack of vim in Daniel at times; and he moved him to seven, and put another man to stroke—for although seven is in a way a more important position in a trained crew even than stroke, it is a seat at which one may soon discover to what extent a man is working. But, really and truly, they could find no fault with Daniel—and were puzzled.

Then fate stepped in, and gave Daniel a chill. Daniel, being something of an ass and everything of a modest youth, did not mention this to anyone. The day of the trial eights race was almost at hand, and he hated to think that he might have to stand down, or that people would perhaps hold that he was making excuses. He was so very conscious of his imagined failings, and so very anxious to show up well in this race. And so he rowed with a chill, and towards the end of an exceptionally stiff race he found that his wind had completely gone, that there was a bursting feeling around his chest, that his throat was dry and his shoulders weak, and that he could not swing straight any longer; and so, breathing like a grampus, he cracked a little—just at the critical moment of the race—his crew were beaten, and people talked anew.

"I'll vow," remarked Halliford excitedly, after the race, having duly noticed that the president of the boat club was behind him, "I was watching Morton as we came up to their bows, and I distinctly saw him slacking—wasn't doing a ha'porth of work, and wasn't rowing his shoulders back a bit."

"Then, perhaps," said McIntosh, coming up, "you will in future keep your eyes in the boat." And Halliford did not row in the 'Varsity crew that year.

But Daniel's weakness was noticed and commented upon, blackening his bad name and bearing out Halliford's words, and since there was that year what the papers call a "plethora of talent" at Cambridge, he rowed only for a time in the 'Varsity crew, and was then dropped.

It required some little boldness on the part of McIntosh to drop a Morton, but he had consulted Vance, the secretary, and reviewing the names of the men who really ought to get places, they decided that Daniel must go, at all events for a time: not because he was an indifferent oar, but because they thought they had detected his weakness, just as Welbridge had thought, and felt compelled to take notice of it. And Daniel never got back into the crew; but because of his style and size, and because he could row at any seat in the boat, and, in all probability, mostly because he was a Morton, they made him spare man, and, humble and abashed, he set out with the crew to train.

And at home the Morton family, mouthing in fury, debated this insult to the family name, and wrote coldly sympathetic letters to Daniel, which hurt him exceedingly. And life was very grey.

CHAPTER II

"I THINK," said Muriel, "that McIntosh is a horrible man."

"But he is not," said Jameson, emphatically. "McIntosh is a great pal of mine.

Old family friend, and all that. Went about with me in a pram, I believe."

"Then why," asked Muriel, "didn't he put Daniel in the crew?"

"That," said the young man, with an explanatory wave of the hand, "is because, besides being a very excellent fellow and a pram mate of mine, he is also President of the C. U. B. C., and to be that successfully a man must be relentless, decisive, and without sentiment."

The two stood on the balcony of a boat-house overlooking the river at Putney. Cambridge were out doing a trial against a scratch crew in which Daniel was rowing, and Jameson, an old Blue and a stolid admirer of Muriel, was entertaining her in their absence.

"Yousay," said she presently, "that McIntosh is a great friend of yours, Mr. Jameson."

"He calls me Sambo," said Jameson, simply.

"Then I wonder if you would do me a favour."

"If," said Jameson, "it is anything in the way of licking your boots, yes."

"I want you to ask McIntosh why he left Daniel out of the crew. I often wonder whether that person, Mr. Halliford, had anything to do with it. I once met him at a dance and had to be rather decisive with him; and I know he hates Daniel."

"Who?" said Jameson, searching for light. "Halliford? Never heard of him. What is he—strike agitator or something?"

"He's at Cambridge. You probably would not know him, though. But will you ask McIntosh?"

"I'll ask him," said he; "but I don't know what he's called upon to say."

"Thank you!" said Muriel, with a radiant smile.

"Ah," thought Jameson, "hero, me!"

The following day he again sought out Muriel, who came over to Putney almost regularly to watch the crews, usually with her father or one of her brothers. As soon as they were isolated in the crowd he drove home his point.

"I asked McIntosh," said he, with the air of a man who has flown the Atlantic.

"Dan," said Muriel, "*why* aren't you in the crew?"

"And what did he say?" said Muriel.

"He said that unfortunately the rules only permitted eight men to row in the crew."

"Well?"

"And that Daniel was one of about six ninth men."

"Is that all he would say?" asked Muriel.

"I argued with him a bit. 'But Morton,' I said, 'is no end of an oar, and beefy into the bargain—and then, he's a Morton.'"

This did not seem to Muriel to constitute a very powerful case; but she smiled encouragingly upon Jameson.

"And he said," continued the old Blue, "that Daniel was the Morton failure. He said that all your family knew that he couldn't 'last' in a race."

"Oh!" said Muriel, indignantly. "*What* a story! They've never said anything of the sort!"

"Everyone," said he, apologetically, "thinks they have, anyway. It's common knowledge."

And thus, through Muriel, light came to the Morton brothers and to William Morton, their sire; and they grew round-eyed, and wondered amongst themselves. And it never struck them that in their well-meant criticism there had been danger, since when the Mortons spoke *en bloc* the rowing world listened.

When Daniel had come ashore after his practice scull that day, and had changed, Muriel received him with even more sisterly tenderness than ever. He was a well-built, sandy-haired fellow with a cheery smile, and an unassuming way that, despite his name and abilities, seemed to say, "Who am I? Let the ground open and envelop me." But, like the Amateur Demon who on the first night of the pantomime dived head-first at the trap-door as per arrangement, and discovered, miserable man, that this had jammed, Daniel, seeking seclusion, found all ways barred. Daniel was just about to be led into the limelight.

"Dan," said Muriel, kindly, "*why* aren't you in the crew?"

"Sorry," said he, humbly.

"I know. So am I, awfully—but not for the family. I'm sorry for you."

"Ah," said he, awkwardly; "thanks."

"Was it," said she, "anything to do with Halliford?"

"Great Scott! No," said he, laughing. "There wasn't anything behind it. I'm just not good enough."

"Oh!" said Muriel. Then, after a pause, "And are Cambridge going to win?"

"I don't know," he said, doubtfully "It'll be rather a tight race, I think. Not much in it, you know. Still, it's our turn, isn't it, after the last five years?"

As the great day approached this became more and more the opinion of the general public. It was hoped that Cambridge would make a great effort to regain the honours; but there was somehow that slight lack of dash about them that makes critics doubtful. The crew were well together, rowing powerfully, swinging well, and getting on to the work in good style; but there was just that want of real devil in Vance, their stroke, that makes a crew better at paddling than racing; whilst Oxford, by comparison, were, above all, lively and fast. With them the question was really: how much lead could they get at the start, and how long could they keep it?

CHAPTER III

SENSATION is a wily bird. A man coming late to a dance meets his own punishment; but sensation, dashing on to the stage at the last possible moment; creates all the more stir by the very lateness of its arrival. It is all gallery play, you know. On the day before the race, then, sensation came.

Morrison, the Cambridge seven, was suddenly taken ill. He endeavoured to row in the morning, but was in such pain that the eight had to put back, and he was sent home. The crew landed and went back into the boat-house, and the coach came ashore and consulted McIntosh. Daniel must, of course, be called upon; but some doubt existed as to whether it would be wise for him to occupy the responsible position of seven. Five was, however, an enormous man, only really suited for that particular seat, and the crew were so well together in the bows that it seemed a pity to upset the order of rowing. Daniel had, all said and done, rowed seven in the trials, and had usually occupied that seat in the scratch eights that had been pacing the crew. He was thoroughly fit too, as all spare men have to be, and eventually McIntosh sought him out.

"Morton," said he, "I want you to change and row in the crew to-day, in Morrison's place."

"Seven?" said Daniel. His heart was thumping against his ribs as a rat throws itself at the bars of a cage; but a modest man rarely shows

excess of delight outwardly. So he seemed quiet and collected.

"Yes," said McIntosh. Daniel changed and took his place in the boat. His soul went into his work that day; he rowed with all that was in him; and critics were pleased and excited. He seemed in no way to disorganise the crew, and was well in with Vance right through the stroke. The news was flashed round to the evening papers, and Muriel, who had not come down to Putney that day, noticed a poster as she was passing through the West End. "Boat Race Sensation" it stated. That was all, and Muriel, buying a paper, read the rest. A small paragraph headed "Spare Man Rows in Cambridge Crew" told the news. To the world it was merely an extra flutter of excitement entering into the race. To Muriel it was much more. She pictured Daniel's excitement, well hidden under his modest smile. As the youngest member of the family, and the most unassuming, he had always been her favourite—now he was likely to come into his own after all.

She went home hurriedly with the news; and the brothers Morton studied the paragraph with keen interest, and commented on the unusual proceeding of a spare man rowing seven. Next day the Morton family left early and made for Putney, for the *Sportsman* told fuller details. Morrison was down with an internal chill, and would probably not be well enough to row. Would this lose Cambridge the race? Everyone was discussing this point as they made for the course; each man and woman in that great, good-humoured boat-race crowd argued the point with the conviction of old experts. There was much sympathy for Morrison, who, after training stoically for so long a time, was at the last moment deprived from rowing in the race, and for Cambridge as a crew. Your boat-race crowd is always sympathetic.

In the morning the crew paddled a short distance and practised a few starts; and again Daniel frustrated the critics from Cambridge. McIntosh, worried and anxious, discussed the matter with the coach.

"What is it," said the latter, "that makes you think he won't last?"

"He didn't in the trials. Besides, they found it out at Welbridge. Even his own brothers say so. If we thought he'd stick it we'd have had him at stroke like a shot from the first."

"Well, I'll talk to him. I expect he knows enough to swing straight even when he's dead-beat, doesn't he? I'll go and impress that on him. His style's excellent, you know."

"Yes," said McIntosh; "it's the Morton style all right, but——"

"Don't you worry," said the coach, soothingly. "You keep him going from six."

Then a reporter came up.

"Pardon me, Mr. McIntosh," said he; "but is Mr. Morton going to row?"

McIntosh nodded grimly, and turned away. It was his last term at Cambridge. Somehow he meant this race to be won.

The start was at two o'clock; the day, fine and clear, had brought a multitude to the course. Daniel, walking down Putney High Street with his brothers that afternoon, strove valiantly to keep calm. The fear of a man about to row in the Boat Race is not, as is commonly supposed, that he will catch a crab; he is simply excited, and anxious to get the thing over and off his mind. The fact that it is near, that it has come at last, worries him. It is something akin to the feelings of a man about to hear the verdict of a jury that has been trying him for weeks. This is not so very much the anxiety of what the sentence, if any, will be. It is merely an aching longing to get the thing over. Daniel's brothers knew the feeling, and so did not worry him with advice. They just walked with him, as do kennelmen with a prize dog, calmly optimistic, and said how fit he looked. Then they came to the first signs of the real magnitude of the crowd at Putney Bridge. Traffic was almost held up—the scene was something like a mass of bees disguised as men and women, clustering round a hive, waving paper handkerchiefs, blowing their noses with linen ones, and airing their faulty knowledge. All eyes were turned on each Blue as he came in sight, pushing his way indifferently through the crowd. Everybody recognised Daniel, for the simple reason that his photograph was prominent in all the papers that morning accompanied by the question, "Is he fit?" The man in the street likes to be asked questions like this, because he can always tell you the answer. He *knows*. That is why headlines in the papers seldom make statements; they ask riddles, and the circulation goes up.

Muriel had a few words with Daniel at the boat-house before he changed, and there were excited little tears of laughter in her dancing eyes as she "blessed" him in the motherly way some sisters have. Daniel grinned sheepishly, and went in to change.

That is the devilish time. The sensation of that half-hour before the boat is launched is like that of being swung by a silken thread ov-

The cox kept his head superbly. "Come on!" he yelled. "*He's* all right. Follow Morton. One-two—three!"

a forest of pins and needles. Once in the boat, the old confidence returns. Each man finds in his oar a trusted friend. He loves the old familiar look of the next man's shoulders in front of him; the glimpse of the coxswain occasionally vouchsafed him, the encouraging, crisply shouted "First four!" And then that "Easy. Forward all. Paddle!" It was that that really steadied Daniel. It came as he was just gripping the handle of his oar as a man shakes hands with a pal. His arms stiffened, his shoulders grew taut; then at the cheery "Paddle!" his blade was in the water, the boat was moving smoothly down towards Putney Bridge, and the crowd were cheering in their thousands. Oxford did not keep them waiting long at the stake-boat; but whilst they were there Daniel was conscious of the rows of eager faces peering down over the bridge, and felt somehow that they were all admiring friends. Then came McIntosh's quiet, slightly tense voice behind him, from six.

"Don't worry," said he, "but watch that start. Arm work on the first stroke. Just dip, and out again. Above all, keep in with Vance and swing. Nothing else matters. When he hits it up, get in with him exactly and pick up the stroke. Don't lose your head and rush your slide. Watch it, now, and wait for the word."

So Daniel waited, tense and highly strung, and when Oxford were straight, and the great crowded steamboats were turning and puffing impotently in the distance, the umpire with the two coaches aboard his launch glided up.

"I shall ask you once," he cried, "'Are you ready?' And if there's no answer, I shall say go! Are you ready? Go!"

Daniel, calm now because he was rowing, thought only of Vance and the importance of that first half-minute. There was never a glance at the other crew. His eyes were strained at stroke's shoulders, watching Vance's dipping blade out of the corner of his eye, and he got in with it exactly. The cox was counting the strokes in shrill, clear tones. Then somehow he knew they were passing Putney Pier, and coming to the boat-houses. On either side thundered the roars of the crowd that enjoys this free match to its full. There is something of real splendour in that sight of two crews rowing past in perfect, unhurried rhythm, and it is difficult for a man not to shout something.

Oxford were slightly in front, and many eyes—had Daniel but known it—were fixed on him and his perfect style, watching already for the "cracking" that they knew would come. Vance, a phlegmatic fellow at all times, declined to be hustled. He knew his crew and their ability to keep the stroke long and to pull it through; and he held them well together and, reaching out, kept them all at the long swing. Very slowly Oxford, with their faster stroke and livelier style, were going away. Now half a length, now three-quarters, was between the bows; nearly a length as they passed Beverly Brook, and still the unabated roar came from the crowd, the roar that is never really heard, and yet would be so missed if suddenly stopped.

As they reached the mile post Vance for the first time signalled to the cox with his eyes. "Dozen," he grunted, and the little man with the megaphoned face bellowed his orders.

"*Watch the time!* You're going up now! We're just going to have a good dozen and catch 'em. Make 'em thick 'uns, and get on to that beginning. LIFT!!"

And Daniel, feeling now the first real effects of the struggle, kept his eyes fixed on Vance's shoulders, moving with clockwork regularity, and picked up the stroke with mechanical precision.

"Well rowed!" came from McIntosh in a curt grunt; and thus encouraged, Daniel swung on to his oar, and backed up his stroke with a superb oarsmanship that experts on the bank realised and cheered.

"Now you're going up!" came the coxswain's shriek. "They're coming back! Hard down with the legs! Up we go! Nine, ten, eleven, twelve! *Well rowed! You've* got 'em! That's the style! *Oh, well rowed, seven!* You're late, bow!!!"

And then Oxford put in their answering spurt, and slowly drew away again to their three-quarter length lead, where Vance, dropping to his long twenty-eight again, kept them. From here on Daniel knew that he had to harbour his strength with calm judgment. He must never abate that steady backing up of Vance, yet he must keep enough devil in him for the spurts that were bound to come. At last the two crews, still very close, came to Crab Tree Wharf, and within sight of Hammersmith Bridge. Round the bend Vance, on the Middlesex station, tried hard to pick up the distance between them. It was a calm day with good water, and Cambridge, with a great, sustained spurt, drew up and held Oxford as they shot the bridge; the madly excited roar from the crowd conveyed nothing, yet half of those who shouted were shouting to Daniel in sympathy and encouragement. To their anxious

eyes he already showed signs of weakness; they ignored the straight swing, the shoulders rowed back, the steady reach-out, no—all this was as nothing—he was weakening.

It was the same old cry as had always gone out to Daniel. He would never last! And so, still following those rounded shoulders in front, he reached out, and told himself he could. And the cox, with cracking voice, still called to them and counted the strokes with vigorous emphasis, and all the while he, too, was watching seven, and praying that he would last, and since he felt that improbable, he shouted to him again and again with a "Well rowed, seven!" that found its way to Daniel's great heart, and kept him swinging, swinging.

Then, as they slowly approached Chiswick Church, Oxford drew out again, and their old lead came back; and again Vance went at them with that cool judgment, which, with sufficient devil to help it, would have made him a great stroke, and slowly brought them back. Then again Oxford went away with a great challenging spurt that Vance left unanswered for a while.

Chiswick Church and the Ferry were passed, and still Oxford held their lead—now a full length. Men in the launches following said that the race was over now; Morton was tiring, they pointed out; he could no longer pick up Vance's spurts. But they were wrong. Daniel knew that he was a Morton, knew that he *had* to keep going, and he was ready always for the next quickening of the stroke.

Behind him men were grunting now; and McIntosh, breathing heavily, could hardly get out his orders.

"Tell him," he half groaned at Daniel's back, "not—let—'em get—too—far."

And Daniel passed on the message, and in answer came the first signs of a long spurt.

Gradually Vance hit up the stroke. The watch at his stretcher told him he was doing thirty, then thirty-three, and thirty-five; and Oxford, scrambling just a little over the stroke now, came back, little by little, despite the plaudits of their cox.

The race—a race of history—went on, and presently they came to the bend at Barnes Bridge; Oxford, with their canvas lead, strove for more as they shot through with a desperation in which there was little "kick." Then suddenly Vance, now tiring also, saw, in the mist before his eyes, a wild, blank horror in the cox's face; there came loud, sharp cries of warning, and a startling double intensity in the roar from the crowd. He looked sharply to the side; realised dully that a skiff was between the Oxford crew and his own. In it two men were pulling in furious haste, whilst a woman stood in the bows waving a flag, and asking in shrill tones for a vote—a police boat was shooting across from the barges on the Surrey side. To Vance's dulled senses it merely conveyed sudden disaster. He saw that the Oxford cox had been sent right out of his course, losing a good deal of ground, then he saw his own cox pull with all his strength on one rudder-line. The boat rocked, then the skiff crashed into Vance's oar and knocked it from his hands, and the crew were past. Vance, with a hoarse, savage, panting cry, reached for his oar again, and found just the handle. Back by the skiff the oar, broken at the button, was floating on the water. He tried desperately to keep the stroke going with the wretched, useless toy in his hands—it was hopeless. Vance realised what he must do. He shouted breathlessly to the cox.

"Tell Morton to take 'em on!" Then, as the men were finishing a stroke behind him, he rose up, and threw himself over the side of the boat. The cox kept his head superbly.

"*Come on!*" he yelled. "He's all right! *Follow Morton!* One—two—three!"

Oxford had got back by now into their right course, and had picked up their slight lead again whilst Vance had jumped overboard. Now they were half a length to the good.

It was Daniel's chance. There was a feeling in his chest that he could breathe no more, his throat was burning, his head throbbed, there was a fog in his eyes and a singing in his ears. Then, not because of this, but because he remembered just then that he was a Morton and that the family were disappointed in him, he reached out and rowed. He was too tired to feel excited. He just accepted the thing that had happened, because it was there. But he did not reason out why it had happened or what would happen to Vance.

McIntosh was moaning unintelligible words behind him. Now and again, as Daniel pulled the crew together, he heard him gasping "Well rowed, Morton!" as if in a dream; then they drew out of sight of Barnes Bridge.

Oxford still had their slight lead, but that tragic incident had upset them, and the crowd saw what Daniel did not know—that they were also cracking, falling to pieces in their swing. Their stroke was glancing over his shoulder and calling to seven, who could neither see nor hear him properly. And Morton was hitting up the stroke where Vance had stopped, and taking it to thirty-eight, where he kept it going hard.

In the umpire's launch behind, the Cambridge coach, heavily ulstered, was leaning out over the bows, beating the air madly with a clenched fist like some inspired orator, whilst from his mouth proceeded wild shrieks such as one associates with a fat boy pricked by a long pin. Beside him another man in a dark blue cap gripped the handrails of the launch with knotted fists, and each time that Oxford dipped his arms grew stiff and his shoulders taut as he threw them back with a half-mastered sob as if his heart were trying to jump out of his mouth, and he were forcing it back.

And slowly at first, then much more perceptibly, Cambridge went up.

"Keep it long!" yelled their cox, who, manœuvring his rudder lines with consummate skill, was keeping his crew on a wonderfully straight course. "*That's all!* Just row and you're bound to win. *They're beaten now!* Oh, well stroked! Up we go! Now they're feeling it! Here they are! You can see 'em now, six! Well rowed! You're *nearly* there! Take her up a little bit more, stroke! Just a dozen more! *Legs down! Legs!* LEGS! LEGS!"

And then Daniel realised that he was beside their cox, that they had just a canvas lead. He looked across dully, saw that Oxford were really cracking now—saw their rocking heads. Then he signalled to the cox with his bloodshot eyes, and started his final effort. That spurt will always live on. It will be held up as a feat of oarsmanship unparalleled in history—that great day on which a spare man took home six men like a Harcourt Gold is red-marked in every rowing calendar.

Behind him came still the encouraging groans of McIntosh.

"Come on—I'm backing you up! Come on!"

Slowly they went up. Daniel was level with his rival stroke; then with seven, then with six—then he knew he had a half-length lead, and his stroke went on at the same blinding pace; he was using every ounce of his weight, his head was straight, his blade-work clean. Suddenly he realised that his cox was telling him to stop; that that little man was reaching out hopelessly for his hand over stroke's empty seat, that the hand of McIntosh, heavy with weariness, was upon his shoulder. He stopped rowing, turned round, dazed, on his slide.

"Good—g-g-good race!" he panted, stupidly.

And the air was thick with great thunderous cheers for the youngest of the Mortons, because he had lasted.

* * * * *

"My boy," said Paterfamilias Morton, later, nearly weeping with delight, "you are the pick of the lot. Shake, Dan'l!"

And Daniel shook.

"Oh," said he, "it was nothing. We couldn't have spurted if Vance hadn't held us together right over the course."

But Muriel, laughing hysterically, would not rest until she had sought and found Halliford because, being a woman, her instinct had told her that Halliford was not too pleased with Daniel. Then, calming herself, said she:—

"Good afternoon, Mr. Halliford. Are you doing any boating now?"

And Halliford understood.

Vance, safely rescued, came up afterwards with McIntosh, and grinned expansively as he slapped Daniel's shoulder.

"Morton," said he, "you take the biscuit." And his hand was searching for Daniel's.

After all it is not always the dog with the good name that takes the biscuit, is it?

THE END

By the Creek

From the cedar swamp they watched the Chinaman haul a green canoe from the water and carry it up to his house.

ANOTHER STORY OF BIRDETT THE TRAILER

By H. MORTIMER BATTEN ◇ ◇ Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock

JACK FARLAND read the notice thoughtfully. It hung in the window of the Smithson House, and ran as follows :—

" Anyone giving information that will lead to the conviction of any person or persons selling or trading drinks containing above two per cent. of alcohol in this city, will be awarded the sum of $100.00. *(Signed) G. A. Crawshaw."*

" Gee ! " muttered Jack Farland. " Seems that the police are confessing themselves floored at last." And having imprinted the notice on his mind he hurried back towards home, intent on informing his cousin of the state of affairs.

There is no disguising the fact that between Frank Birdett and the local police a healthy rivalry had always existed, and nothing pleased either side more than the opportunity of scoring off the other. Birdett's office as local game warder and fire ranger often brought him in close contact with the police, and since his knowledge of wood-lore far surpassed that of the imported men, he had more than once shone brilliantly at their expense. Moreover, Birdett thought the police to be slack, and made no efforts to hide his opinion, all of which went against the grain with the local representative of the law.

Jack found his cousin cleaning and polishing the little automatic pistol he usually carried with him in the woods.

" Heard the news, Frank ? "

" That old Sally's cow has died, and hereafter milk will be ten cents dearer ? Yep. They were salting her down for the marten traps——"

" No, not that," Jack broke in. " I suppose you know someone has been peddling whisky in the camp for weeks past, and that the police are at all ends to catch him——? "

" Sure. I reckon it comes in by the creek from Black Fox River."

" Well, that's what we want to find out. There's a hundred-dollar bounty up for his scalp."

The two looked at each other and grinned. Here was a chance, if you like, of scoring off Crawshaw, the local magnate of justice. Had the police asked for Birdett's assistance long ago he would gladly have given it, but though they knew he was the one man to help them they had never consulted him upon the matter. This, to say the least, was hardly courteous, since by the law of the land the police and the forest rangers are supposed to work hand in hand when the duties of the police are such as to take them into the woods which the rangers patrol.

"We'll just slip along and see friend Crawshaw," observed Birdett, with a wink. "That hundred dollars would just come in useful to buy a new sled for next winter."

Jack knew, however, that the possibility of scoring off the police was a far greater enticement to his cousin than the reward. Birdett thrust the little pistol into its nook under the eaves, rearranged his necker, scraped the mud from his shoepacks with the handle of the frying pan, and led the way up the corduroy walk to the city.

It was yet early morning, and the bustle of the day had hardly begun. The nigger at the Smithson House was sweeping the steps, and threatened to sweep the two into eternity with the dust as they passed, whereupon Jack accidentally tripped over the broom and sent it ricochetting into the gutter.

"Say, Birdett," called the nigger. "Seen this notice?"

Birdett strolled to the board. "Gee!" he muttered, as his eyes skimmed the printed sheet. "Now, I shouldn't be surprised, Joe, if that whisky comes in crates labelled 'cabbages' or 'oranges.'"

The nigger shook his head wisely. "Not it," he answered. "Them bluejackets brought a sample here last week. There weren't no label on the bottle, and the cork looked to me as though it come out of a champagne bottle."

"Which means they're bottling it themselves," muttered Birdett. "I don't suppose you got the bottle or the cork anywhere?"

"The boss got it, sure. Come inside, boys."

They interviewed Hanson, who took the bottle of illicit spirit from a cupboard, and handed it to Birdett. The young woodsman drew the cork, and sniffed the contents.

"I'm no connoisseur of poisons," he observed, "but it smells to me like methylated spirit. What do you make of it, Hanson?"

"Cheapest stuff you can buy," answered the proprietor.

"Which backs up my theory that it came in by the creek," observed Birdett, turning to his cousin.

"Don't see it," muttered Jack, shortly.

"Why, just this. Don't you see this whisky's got to sell at five dollars a bottle? Now, if it were coming in by an easy route they'd supply better stuff to keep a good market, but when they've got to portage it round by Black Fox River they can't put in good stuff at the price."

"So they take the cost of portage out of the quality of the whisky," observed Jack. "That seems sound enough, anyway. But what licks me is—why don't they go the whole hog by sticking a label on and pretending it's a good brand? No good being dishonest unless one does it properly."

"That's what gets over me," owned Birdett, "and, moreover——" He was examining the cork with considerable interest. He noticed that it was swollen at the thick end, though it was certainly not a champagne cork, for it bore no string marks. Birdett took out his knife and cut the cork in two down the middle, then he squeezed one of the sections between the ball of his hand and the edge of the table. Out of the pores of it oozed tiny pin-points of black fluid, which Birdett wiped on his finger and held to his nostrils.

"Hum! Ain't whisky, anyway," he muttered. "We'd best get on, Frank. We were just on our way to interview Crawshaw when Joe pointed out the notice. So-long, Hanson."

They found the police sergeant busy in his office, and smoking a large cigar. He looked up sternly as Birdett entered. "Well, my man, what d'you want?" he inquired, bluffly.

Birdett threw down his hat, calmly took a chair, and eyed the officer inquiringly. "I aren't your man," he answered, quietly, "though the superintendent tried hard enough to get me after the Berwick camp affair. What I want is that hundred dollars you're offering for the whisky pedlar."

"Huh! Kind of think I've nothing to do but write you a cheque for it, do you?" said Crawshaw with a grin. "Bring the man along, then I'll talk to you."

"I suggest we talk business," said Birdett, coolly. "I should be obliged if you will give me a little information regarding the state of affairs. I have a notion the whisky comes in by the creek."

"Then you're wrong, my man. I can assure you the whisky does *not* come in by the creek, because the creek has been carefully watched for weeks past, and more whisky has come in than ever."

"Watched by whom?" inquired Birdett, sharply.

"By myself," answered the superintendent, with a dignified inclination of the head. "I think nothing more need be said upon that matter."

Birdett was silent a moment, then he inquired, "Were you alone?"

This was cheek, and Birdett knew it, though he did not feel disposed to couch his inquiries in less straightforward language.

The grey eyes of the police officer fixed him

with a calm stare. For some seconds there was no answer, then Crawshaw said, "Pardon me, Birdett, but I think you are taking rather a liberty in making such an inquiry. Of course you are quite at liberty to try for the hundred dollars, but when you come butting round police affairs——"

"I think I should know, Mr. Crawshaw," Birdett answered. "You know I shall keep faith, and I consider it your duty to answer any ordinary question. We are both under an obligation."

"You have a clue, then?"

"Have you any?"

The police officer shook his head. "We are completely in a fog," he confessed. "We have worked on the case five months, and simply haven't a single clue."

"And I," said Birdett, "have worked on the case about five minutes, and have already discovered what I consider to be a very important clue."

The police officer coloured up angrily. Birdett smiled graciously. "I happen to know," he observed, "that Corporal Greenwood was with you when you watched the creek."

"Wrong again!" cried the officer, jubilantly. "Think I should take a wooden-headed clod like Greenwood with me? No, Si Tee is my man—Si Tee, who can see in the dark well enough to trail a deer."

"Thanks," said Birdett, "that's just what I wanted to know. Greenwood, of course, has been away south for the last fortnight. So-long——"

But the police officer had already risen to his feet and was waving them impatiently to the door. They lost no time in going out. In the main avenue Jack gave way to an uncontrollable spasm of mirth, conscious of the fact that Crawshaw was watching them from the window. "Gosh! we scored off him there, Frank," muttered the boy. "But we'll have to bring it off after this. We'll simply have to, or he'll crow over us for ever."

Birdett was thoughtful. He stood at the edge of the sidewalk, hands on hips, absently watching a family of Indians squatting on the sidewalk opposite. Presently he turned to Jack and regarded the boy thoughtfully. "I reckon you want your hair cutting," he observed. "We'll go right away and get it cut."

Jack felt his stubbly scalp. "Only cut a week back," he demurred.

"Never mind. We'll have it cut again so long as there's something to cut. I want a talk with Si Tee."

Si Tee was a well-known character, for he was a Chinaman of most extraordinary abilities. It was known that he could cook a six-course dinner, splice a rope, track a deer, mend boots, make clothes—in fact, that he had almost every trade in the country at his finger-tips, and could execute any one of them with an expert hand. Moreover, he possessed the extraordinary ability to see in the dark. He was at the beck and call of everyone, and recently it had been noticed that Crawshaw had discovered in the Chinaman an able help, for which he paid liberally.

It has been said that no man can serve two masters, but Si Tee served at least a dozen, while on his own he carried on a barbering establishment where he spent such time as was not otherwise employed. Si Tee was reported the cleverest and most able man in Swan Lake City.

The two made their way down to the Chinaman's establishment. The shop was empty. Jack seated himself in the chair, while Birdett stamped on the floor and shouted, "Shop!"

Si Tee came from the back of the building, a glue-pot in one hand and a brush in the other.

"See the notice about the whisky peddling?" he inquired as soon as he observed Birdett.

"Sure. Some poor swipe will get landed. The bo' wants his hair cutting."

Si Tee prepared for the operation. "I got an idea it comes in by the creek," observed Birdett, presently.

The Chinaman looked at him narrowly. "So has Crawshaw," he answered, cunningly. "He's watched the creek for weeks past, but can't catch anyone."

"And you with him," said Birdett. "You've let them slip by you somewhere."

"Have we, though," answered the Chinaman. "I tell you, I see in the dark. No one has passed us. You're like Crawshaw—you're making a big mistake in fancying it comes by the creek. Crawshaw's had me near froze watching night after night. I'm about sick of it."

"Reckon there must be good pay at the end," observed Birdett, "or you wouldn't go."

The Chinaman winked wisely. "Catch me on that wild goose chase if there wasn't good pay," he agreed. "But I'll quit it soon. It's just wasting time watching that creek with the stuff coming in from the bush all the time. See here, Birdett. If you're after that hundred dollars, you leave the creek to Crawshaw, and

watch the tote roads. You'll stand a sight better chance."

"You bet I will. But what makes Crawshaw think it comes in by the creek?"

The Chinaman shook his head and looked perplexed.

"Is it Si Tee who thinks it comes in by the creek, and who wants us to keep away because he's after the hundred dollars himself?" Jack inquired, laughingly.

Si Tee was angry. He said no more till the time came to go, when he politely wished them good morning.

They walked up the main avenue towards home, but when half-way it seemed that an idea suddenly occurred to Birdett.

"Si Tee was making a canoe out in the back there, wasn't he?" Birdett inquired of Jack.

"Making one or else repairing one, I believe," Jack answered.

"Then we'll just hie back and see what he's up to. No—there he is. Come on this way."

The Chinaman had come out of the front door of his shop and was looking up and down the avenue. Birdett and Jack slipped between two houses into the region of garbage heaps and empty fruit cans at the back. Thence Birdett led the way hurriedly to the cedar swamp; from the edge of which they commanded a full view of the main landing-stage.

They saw Si Tee come down and haul a green canoe from the water. It was the one he had used all that summer. He carried it up to his house, and in ten minutes or so came back with a newly painted one, which he launched.

"Huh!" muttered Birdett the Trailer. "Only overhauling his canoes after all. Let's go and bask in the sun opposite the Smithson House."

They had not basked very long when again it seemed that an idea occurred to Birdett "I'd like to see that canoe Si Tee and Crawshaw have been using," he observed, curiously.

"What you want to see that for?" inquired Jack.

Birdett shook his head. "If Crawshaw would only take us into his confidence it would save all this skulking and watching," he observed. "I can understand that he don't want us butting in, but you see it's this way: these police are town men, and may be good enough at ordinary police work, but in a bush country they're up against an entirely different problem. Why, Crawshaw has to take the Chink with him because he can't find his way in the dark."

"It strikes me," said Jack, "that Si Tee is after that hundred dollars. He's got a clue of some sort."

"Si Tee is no fool," Frank agreed. "Hallo, here s Joe Long. Hi! Joe, my son, when did you come in?"

The Indian slouched up to them. "Two hours back," he answered. "Come to buy canoe. Mine leak."

"Si Tee's got one to sell, I fancy," Birdett answered. "He's the only likely man. If you can get his old one and bring it along to my shanty I'll give you five dollars."

The Indian nodded and strolled away.

Birdett and Jack went back to their shanty and prepared lunch. During the meal Joe Long beached a canoe at the landing-stage below.

"Got it?" shouted Birdett, eagerly.

Joe Long nodded. He had bought the Chink's old canoe for a few dollars, which were certainly all it was worth.

Birdett hauled the craft out of the water and examined the body of it carefully. There were two slight scratches upon the gunwale which seemed to interest him vastly. He turned the canoe upside down and examined every inch of it. Then suddenly he began to laugh.

He laughed as though all the jokes of a lifetime had occurred to him. He lay down on his back holding his sides and rolling. Joe Long, with characteristic Indian sensitiveness, concluded that the young man was laughing at him, and with head held high relaunched the canoe and made off before Birdett had recovered sufficiently to explain. He did not even wait for his five dollars.

When Jack questioned him Birdett retired into his shell. "Just a little idea that occurred to me," he said. "I'll tell you later—if we get the hundred dollars." So saying he fell asleep where he lay, and Jack knew this to mean that they would be up all night. Birdett had marvellous control of himself. Most people imagined that he could go for days without sleep, but in reality he took his sleep in snatches. He was able to drop asleep whenever he chose, and waken to the minute. Thus, when working under pressure, he was able to revive himself by snatching a few minutes' sleep at such odd intervals as while waiting for the kettle to boil, or for his partner to perform some small camp duty.

Jack lay down on the dry earth, and they

slept side by side till near sundown. A hastily snatched meal, then by canoe to the city. They beached the canoe under the cedar trees a hundred yards or so from the main landing-stage, then made their way to a point where they could lie out of sight, though within a few yards of the landing-stage.

Dusk came on rapidly, then darkness fell. The few men loitering about the main landing vanished into the gloom. The hours passed by. It was after eleven o'clock when at length Crawshaw, clad in plain clothes, put in an appearance. He stood on the floating platform and whistled softly. After a minute or so Si Tee, wearing a heavy overcoat, appeared.

At length the Indian turned, almost stepping on them, when Birdett sprang up, flashing his electric lamp.

"We'll sure get them to-night, Mr.

Crawshaw," muttered the Chink in a low voice. "I hear that a load is coming in by the creek to-night, certain."

"How do you find out?" Crawshaw inquired.

"Ah," answered the Chink, "if I told you all you would not require my services. I can pick things up about camp that would never reach your ears. Was I not right last Thursday when I said a consignment was coming through?"

"You were," agreed the officer, "and it came through in spite of our watching. They slipped us somewhere among the islands. They got through somehow. And, say—that chap Birdett is taking an interest in this affair. I wish to goodness he'd keep to his forest ranging."

The two launched the canoe and paddled away down the river. Birdett and Jack hurried back to their own canoe, launched it, and followed.

They paddled silently and swiftly as Indians. In a few minutes they could hear the police boat ahead of them. The timber overhung the water, and in the shadow of it they slowly overhauled Crawshaw's boat.

Five miles down the river the police officer steered their craft into the mouth of a small slough. Birdett and Jack drifted motionless in the shadow not twenty yards away, and watched. They saw the Chink get out and hold the gunwale while his companion landed. Then they took a rifle each from under a windfall, and silently as panthers proceeded to creep through the bush up the river margin.

"The river narrows a bit higher up," whispered Jack. "They're going to watch the narrow part, and have left their canoe here so that it will be out of sight."

"Whist!" whispered Birdett, softly.

They had distinctly heard a faint movement in the bush quite near at hand. It might be a prowling bear or——

Birdett reached out his hand, clutched the bank, and drew the canoe in. Then very silently he crept ashore, motioning the boy to follow him.

At that moment, as fate would have it, the moon went out. Ah! If only they could see in the dark like Si Tee! They lay on the damp earth under the trees listening intently. Around them it was dark as pitch. Again that faint movement in the bush near at hand, followed by a distinct and heavy footstep. It came nearer, nearer, slow and laboured. They even heard a man's heavy breathing, though they could see nothing.

Presently, as though by magic, the man himself appeared on the bank directly above the police officer's canoe. Birdett and Jack wormed their way nearer. They could hear the sound of iron scraping woodwork, accompanied by the man's heavy breathing as he lowered something into the water. Nearer and nearer crept Birdett and Jack till they were directly behind him. There they lay and waited, occasionally catching a glimpse of the man's head silhouetted against the water.

At length the fellow turned and was almost about to step upon them when Birdett sprang up, flashing his electric flash-lamp.

The unknown individual uttered never a sound, for he was an Indian—a poor, ragged, consumptive-looking wretch, whose eyes were wide with fear. He stood looking at Birdett like a trapped beast.

"Caught you, my son," muttered the young forest ranger. "If you make a sound you'll betray yourself to the police officer, who's within fifty yards of here, accompanied by your partner, Si Tee."

The Indian laid his hands on his lips to signify that he would keep silent. Birdett questioned him and cross-questioned him, till he had learnt everything he wished to know. The man did not lie; it was clear that he had not yet learnt the vices of the white man—that he was simply following the instructions of Si Tee. Birdett explained to him, in simple language of the woods, what would happen to him if he were caught by the police. He dwelt upon the horror of gaol till the poor wretch trembled with fear and looked at him with eyes that pleaded for mercy. No wonder, for Birdett's description was a vivid one, so intent was he upon impressing the fellow. He knew the man with whom he had to deal.

"Where do you come from?" he asked, finally.

"Lake of a Thousand Islands," answered the Indian, with a dramatic sweep towards the north.

"Ah!" said Birdett. "That is Father Bland's district. You know the holy father?"

The Indian nodded. "Don't tell Father Bland," was his child-like entreaty.

"No, I won't tell him," said Birdett, faithfully. "You must tell him yourself, little brother. Go to him like a man and tell him all. He will be your friend, as he has ever been. Can you do it, little brother?"

The Indian's black eyes met his own. There was no fear in them now. They were wild and child-like, for the simple man of the woods felt he had won the faith of one wiser than he. "I will try," he answered simply.

"You promise?"

"I promise."

"And you will promise me to remain with your people evermore, and never again to visit the city of the whites?"

"I promise."

"It is well, little brother. Good-bye."

They shook hands after the white man's custom, and the Indian vanished into the shadow. That was the last Birdett ever saw of him, though a year later, when he visited the Lake of a Thousand Islands, he learnt that the Indian had kept his promise.

The moon had now vanished for good. The two stole back to their canoe, pushed off, and paddled for a mile or so back towards the city. Here they again landed, and Jack slept while Birdett watched. When Birdett wakened him the boy heard the bump, bump of paddles against the gunwale of a canoe somewhere near at hand. The canoe was coming towards them. They slipped into their own frail craft, paddled out, and waited. Soon the canoe loomed through the darkness. "That you, Crawshaw," inquired Birdett in a low voice.

"Yes."

"Any luck?"

"Any luck—no!" growled the police officer. Then he added in the Cree Indian tongue which Si Tee beside him could not understand, "I'm going to arrest this Chink on suspicion when we get back. I fancy he's in with the gang, and is just leading me on to keep me out of the way. He's prophesied every time when the stuff's coming through."

"But he belongs to the police, doesn't he?" inquired Birdett. "A sort of secret detective fellow, eh?"

"Yes. That's it. He belonged to the police in Singapore before he came out here. I'll be sorry to lose him. He's helped me land no end of cases."

"Seems he's helping you land *these* cases," observed Birdett with a sigh.

"What d'you mean by that?"

Birdett ran his hand along the gunwale of the police officer's canoe. "I suppose that reward still holds good?" he inquired, still in the Cree tongue.

"Why, sure."

"And if I tell you who's bringing in the spirit you'll hand over a cheque to-morrow morning?"

"Of course I will. Who is it?"

"Why, your faithful servant, the Chink."

There was a moment's silence, then Crawshaw asked, gravely, "You're sure of that, Birdett?"

"Jerusalem! as sure as ever I can be. There are three or four of them in at it, but the Chink's the leader. They've been paying an Indian, who didn't know what he was letting himself in for, to take the risks. They got it in from Black Fox River, dumped it in the bush within a mile of here, and——"

It would seem that Si Tee understood the Cree tongue better than he pretended to, for at this juncture he suddenly threw his weight on the side of the canoe, and in an instant they were capsized. Crawshaw rose to the surface gasping and coughing, but the Chinaman had vanished.

Birdett switched on his flash-lamp and searched round for the man to break surface. Somehow Si Tee escaped them. The bush on either side was very dense, and though they searched for over an hour they could find no sign.

"Goodness, I shall be ruined if it leaks out what a fool I've made of myself over this job," groaned Crawshaw, as they baled out his canoe. "I shall have to pay you that hundred dollars out of my own pocket, Birdett, if you can prove your story."

Birdett smiled. "I don't want the money," he answered. "I reckon we've stopped the poison coming in, and that's all I was after. But don't you think, Crawshaw, we might work hand in hand a little more than we have done in the past? I don't want the law to back me up—I'd rather make laws of my own to suit the case. But though I'm a lawless beggar, I think we might help each other no end at times."

The police officer held out a cold, wet hand. "I think so too," he agreed. "There will be a better understanding between us after this. But, by the way—who piloted that hootch into the city?"

Birdett laughed. "Why, you yourself," he answered.

The police officer stared at him. "Blessed if I did," he muttered. "What on earth are you aiming at?"

Birdett again ran his hand down the freeboard of Crawshaw's canoe. "If I'm not mistaken," he answered, "you are carrying at least a dozen bottles of hootch under the keel

of your canoe at this very moment. They are contained in a long ebony box, and if you put your hand here you'll feel one of the thin wire chips supporting it. The box was secured when you were up the river with the Chink, and Si Tee would have taken it to-night after he'd seen you safely bedded down."

"Then I have been piloting the wretched stuff in," groaned the police officer incredulously.

Birdett nodded. "You yourself," he agreed; "the very last man on earth you would have suspected."

It is needless to add that neither Birdett nor Jack ever told anyone about their strange adventure of that night, and thereafter Crawshaw and they were on the best of terms.

"It was really the cork that led up to it," Birdett explained. "It was simply saturated with water and swollen all out of shape, which made me think that the bottles had come in tied under a raft. The fact that they were without labels supported this theory. To smuggle labels under separate cover is almost as risky a business as smuggling hootch. Then it was clear that, excepting Crawshaw, Si Tee was the only man making regular trips up and down the creek, and also he was the last man Crawshaw would suspect. When he showed himself so anxious that we should leave the creek business to them, I began to see daylight. Finally the Chink's old canoe gave the show away. When I saw the wire marks down either side of it I simply jumped to the whole scheme. And to think that the beggar was receiving good pay from the Government——"

"Gosh! He was scoring both ends," grinned Jack. "How he must have been laughing up his sleeve at old friend Crawshaw."

VERB. SAP!

Simpson: "I've had a tune running in my head lately. It goes: 'Tum-tum, te-te-tum, toodle, oodle, um-tum.' Do you know it?"
Browne: "H'm. I don't know the *tune*, but I seem to recognise the words."

THE LAST OF HIS LINE

A STORY OF KELLCASTER SCHOOL

By GUNBY HADATH

Author of "Conquering Claybury"

Illustrated by T. M. R. WHITWELL

CHAPTER I

WHICH PROVES THAT PIGS CAN FLY

GAGE and Ellis were inseparable, but nobody in Kellcaster knew why they were called the Persian Lambs. There was nothing lamb-like and nothing Persian about either of them, and if there are any qualities peculiar to the lambs of Persia which distinguish them from others of the species, it is as certain that nobody in the school could define these as it would be idle to pretend that they were displayed by Gage and Ellis.

But in the Lower School they were rarely known by any other name, and in Form Three (to which they had managed for three terms to stick like limpets) they exerted an authority which was more considerable in some ways than that of Mr. Fellowes, who did his best to instruct them in geometry and other things. Gage and Ellis were fonder of Mr. Fellowes than of the geometry and "other things."

It was said that the Persian lambs had first been drawn together by the common bond of impecuniosity, for neither of them ever had any money worth calling such, and they bore their poverty like philosophers. "We're not jealous," they would say, "of oofy men."

Among such oofy men was Simpson Mi, who invariably carried half a dozen stamps in his pocket, and with equal regularity required them for "frightfully important" letters—as he explained when anyone approached him. The Persian lambs themselves refused to do so. For they, they told you, would be hanged before they'd borrow from a stinge.

Although dinner was only just over this bright Saturday—the first in the January term—the Persian lambs felt hungry to a degree. A new cook had been experimenting in puddings; result—flat failure, and a rush upon the tuck-shop.

Hard upon the heels of all the rest, Gage pulled his friend up suddenly.

"I say," cried he, "got any tin?"

"Not a sou."

"Then, what's the good?"

"I thought," said Ellis, "you had."

A shout proclaimed the appearance of Willett, with Moorgate, otherwise the Maggot, who wrote verses for the Third Form, had remarkably fat legs, and just now was very much out of breath.

Puffed he, "You fellows might have waited for a chap!"

"We're waiting," answered Gage and Ellis, sweetly.

Obviously it was the turn of the new comers to move next. But they stood where they were and watched the tuck-shop filling. At last Ellis observed, "Well?"

"We thought," said Willett, airily, "that you were off to tucker."

"Well?"

"We thought we'd go along with you, you know."

"No go. No tin," the Persian lambs said brightly.

The faces of the other two dropped at once.

"Same here," they sighed. "We're done."

It was at this moment that a youth of complaisant and overfed appearance observed them as he passed, and cried to Gage.

"Peckish, Gage?" he cried.

"Oh, beastly," Gage said, shortly.

"Then come along, and I'll stand you a young three-corner?"

Gage shook his head.

"You won't!"

"No, thanks; I won't," said Gage, and added, as the other went off, wrathfully, "I bar Parsons. He's always sucking up."

Willett, wondering if he could have resisted in Gage's place, eyed the retreating Parsons, and remarked that he was a bounder. The Maggot suggested an attempt on Simpson Mi.

"See, here he comes!" he cried. "The beast! He's stole a march on us!"

THE LAST OF HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

It was indeed the minor Simpson who emerged that instant from the tuck-shop, with one hand at his lips. When he saw them he came up rather shamefacedly.

"I thought you men had trotted off already," he exclaimed.

The Maggot gave him one look before answering:—

"Sim, how are you off for tin?"

"Spent it all," said Simpson, under his breath.

"I bet you've moused some stamps?"

"I'll lend you one, Maggot. I want the others—honestly."

A timid youth, of virtuous mien, Simpson Minor liked to be seen in the fellowship of the Persian lambs; it gave him *kudos* among the smaller fry. And as a lever to secure their company afterwards he was trying to screw himself up to parting-point with his stamps, when Gage commanded the Maggot not to cadge, and remarked he knew a better dodge than that. "We're wasting time," he said; "let's trek."

"But where?" cried Ellis.

"To Brotherhood Lane," Gage answered, with a wink. And congratulating himself upon a narrow shave, Simpson Minor restored his stamps to his pocket, and went off diffidently after the others.

Kellcastrians will remember Brotherhood Lane, and that peculiar fragrance of woodbine and sweet grasses which meets you as you turn into the lane in summer-time, and leaves you when you reach the stile and footpath into Dunstan. Nowhere else in England is there anything just like it. You say good-bye to Kellcaster and you cannot reconstruct it; but go back as an Old Boy, and whatsoever years have marred you, that scent comes stealing back as familiarly as if you only smelled it yesterday. Shut your eyes, and it will convince you that you are a boy still.

Kellcastrians of the 'eighties will remember also the one and only building in Brotherhood Lane. In their day it was a wooden cottage, tarred under its roof of thatch, lying forty yards beyond the hedge, which hid a garden of wild fig-trees, and sweet peas, and a vine. And the apple trees behind it! And the cherries!

A gamekeeper abode there then. And because in the vernacular of those times all gamekeepers were "cadgers," and because each spring he tarred his home anew, they christened him the Black House Cadger. But although a natural enemy, he had his points. So the title was not entirely opprobrious.

But the Black House Cadger has gone the way of all flesh, and his wooden home has followed him. It was a brick house when Gage and Ellis knew it, and as they reached it the latter called a halt.

"What price," said he, dramatically, "old Parker's pig?"

Whispered Willett, "He'd slay us if we touch it!"

"And besides," said Simpson Minor, who rarely opened his mouth except to put tuck in or utter pious sentiments, "it wouldn't be right, you know. It wouldn't really, Gage."

Gage laughed and drew them to the hedge. "There! squinny through," he bade. "It's tootling round the front. You can hear it snorting."

"Pigs don't snort," said Simpson Minor. "They grunt. We ought to tell Mother Parker it's got loose."

So true it is that time brings everything to pass. How they would have laughed, the Kellcastrians of the 'eighties, if any had predicted that the tarred lair of their enemy would some day be replaced by the prosaic habitation of a butler! And yet it was so. For the ancient Parker, butler to the Head, abode in the Black House (the name clung still) and Parker's pig was a standing joke to Kellcaster.

It was an only pig, and, Parker said, a pedigree one. In fine weather he gave much time to its society, confining it to the orchard (where it possessed a splendid sty) and bidding it on no account to wander. The front garden and the lane, he had informed it, were strictly out of bounds; the boys would tease it if it strayed into the one, it would be run over if it ventured into the other. It is true that Brotherhood Lane was traversed rarely by anything on wheels, but this Parker concealed from his pet, pretending on the contrary that the lane was a sort of crossing by Oxford Circus or the Bank.

Yes, Parker loved his orchard and his pig. He loved to spend the summer afternoons with them, to smoke his pipe beneath his apple trees and watch his black pig rooting.

And the pig was certainly attached to Parker. But it was also young and adventurous; it longed for larger worlds to conquer, and often, as soon as its master's back was turned, would escape to the front garden, where more delicious vegetables abounded.

But it was discreet. It would come very cunningly round the corner on such occasions, skirmishing to make sure the coast was clear. And if Mrs. Parker's eyes were on it, it dropped

its snout, and grunted, and shammed that it was walking in its sleep.

Gage drew the others quite close to the hedge.

"Parker," he said oracularly, "has ripping gooseberry wine. And cake."

"I thought," growled the Maggot, "we were talking about his pig?"

"So I am, Maggot. Suppose Parker's pig happened to get lost——"

"But it's behind the hedge there!"

"In the front garden. Where it hasn't any right to be."

"Well?"

"Well, it's escaped into the front garden, hasn't it?"

"I suppose so," said the Maggot, grudgingly.

"Suppose that it escaped more——"

"More!"

"Yes, into the lane, for instance."

"How can it? The gate's shut."

"Suppose that it escaped into the lane," repeated Gage, with emphasis, "and suppose that it got lost. Then suppose we rescued it. Wouldn't Parker be thunderingly jolly grateful?"

"You bet he would!"

"Wouldn't he! When he was hunting all over for it, and all of a sudden we five came along——"

"Driving it back?"

"Yes, Maggot, driving it back. Do you think he wouldn't stand us gooseberry wine and cake and things!"

"He would," said Ellis. "Oh, you bet he would!"

"And Parker's cake is A 1," the Maggot cried. "Gage, you're a genius."

Though Simpson Mi protested that it was wrong to let the pig escape, the others were on all fours by the gate already, the hedge screening everything but their heads from the risk of observation in the house. Gage stretched out his arm, and began to chirrup and make other stealthy noises.

"Coop! Coop!" he coaxed, opening the gate. "Good pig! Good old fellow!"

The pig raised its snout from some roots it was inspecting, and regarded Gage reflectively. He looked absurd, it thought, but harmless.

"Hold out something to it!" whispered Ellis. "Here. Here's Simpson's handkerchief."

"Come on!" clucked Gage. "Good fellow!"

The pig moved a pace nearer, and wagged its snout, its shrewd eyes straying to the peep of lane beyond the open gate.

"Sh!" Gage whispered, "sh! you chaps! It's moving. Good piggie then! Good boy!"

When the pig advanced another yard, Gage backed into the lane, and his confederates lay flat beneath the hedge. *He* fancied that the animal rather liked the look of him. *It* was thinking that it had never set eyes on anyone so silly, and wondering what the world beyond was like. All at once it grunted gaily, and dashed out to discover.

But once outside it paused, and then stalked solemnly across the lane. It went in that way to imply that it was doing nothing wrong. On the other side it turned, to survey the situation.

Who knows what his pig thought of old Parker, when it found the lane as peaceful as a desert and much safer? There was not a soul in sight, except the foolish biped who had chirruped, and four things beneath the hedge! It was not concerned in the slightest when one of these jumped up and shut the gate.

Said Gage, "We must drive it up the lane a bit. Quick, before old Parker comes!"

"Gee up!" cried Willett, and clapped his hands at it.

But now that it was out the pig intended to enjoy itself. So when Gage began to clap as well, it merely grunted and waited for him to approach a little nearer. As soon as he was quite near, it dashed between his legs.

Down went Gage.

And off careered the pig.

Off it went with everybody after it, but while Gage picked himself up and rubbed his knees, he felt something warm and wet upon his forehead, and heard a soft patter on the hedge.

"A young storm!" he muttered. "And not half going to pelt!"

They had been too busy to notice that a storm was brewing, and now, when it broke suddenly, Gage's first impulse was to rush for shelter. A glance showed him Simpson Minor already retreating prudently, and the others scampering ahead.

"Silly goats!" cried Simpson, from the hedge. "It's going to pour in buckets."

"But the pig?" Gage asked him, pausing.

"They'll never catch it."

"But hang it! We must try, man!"

"Not I," said Simpson, snuggling closer. "I'm not going to get drenched for any silly old pig. Besides, we oughtn't to have let it out, Gage."

"I say, Simpson, is rain bad for pigs?"

"Oh, frightfully."

"Then I'm after it," said Gage, and dashed away. He began to be horribly afraid that Parker's pig would catch its death of cold, and

in a moment was on top of Ellis and the Maggot, whose attempt to grab their quarry simultaneously had brought both down together. Then Gage noticed that they were running back to Kellcaster.

This struck him all at once. The pig had doubled, and then instead of bolting *up* the lane was now full-tilting *down* it. It had every chance, if it held straight on, of running slap-bang into Parker, assuming that the ancient ventured homewards in the rain.

"By George, though, we must collar it!" Gage cried. "Suppose it got into the grounds!"

"It might easily!" said the Maggot. "Come along!"

By the "grounds" they meant the school grounds, which begin with the meadows beyond the playing fields, and to gain them it had only to dip beneath some wire railings at the lane's end. The spectacle of a dripping pig—and Parker's pig of all pigs—in full flight in the sacred playing fields was one which could not be contemplated with anything but terror by those who might subsequently be found responsible. Whatever they did, they must collar the ungrateful monster!

Off they darted in a body, and, of course, it was easy enough to overtake it. That was only where their troubles began. For the pig was entering properly into the fun, grunting with jubilation when they surrounded it. Then it would duck its head and charge them, and break them as the Arabs once broke a British square.

Twice Gage got his arms about its neck. On the second occasion Ellis was hanging on to its tail, but each time the pig gave a little shake and grunted itself free. Once the Maggot was actually astride it, but the pig bucked like a broncho.

They were not so sorry now that it was raining. Otherwise Parker would certainly have come along before this, and if he had seen what they were doing they could scarcely have persuaded him that they were "rescuing" his treasure. Gage even was ready to admit this.

"I'd leave the beast!" he panted, "but it might actually get lost. We're responsible. We *must* catch it."

Next moment the draught-board was sent flying, and a heavy, dripping body rushed between them.

Its body glistening in the wet, the pig trotted on ahead. Then a brilliant idea took Ellis.

"Look here," he whispered (he whispered because he was sure it understood him). "Look here! Let's sham we're turning back!"

"But why?"

"It'll think we've chucked the game. It'll turn back after us. You'll see."

It seemed the only thing to do. For the failure of another dash might send the pig into the grounds.

They stopped, and Ellis, convinced that it knew what they were saying, carried strategy further. "We'll leave it now," he said at the top of his voice; "it's been a ripping game, you chaps."

"Oh, awfully," cried Willett, as he wrung the wet out of his sleeves. "A ripping game; eh, Gage?"

"Yes," Gage shouted. "Yes. But now we must get back. *It's feeding time!*"

"That ought to fetch it," he added under his breath, and began to stroll back leisurely.

The pig stood still and watched them. For an instant it seemed about to follow. And then it grunted—and squeezed under the wire.

And no sooner were its feet on sacred territory than it sprinted at full speed. If you don't believe a pig *can* sprint, ask Gage.

On a fine day its exodus would probably have ended there; it would have been espied and headed off, nor ever permitted to gain the playing fields.

Alas! however, for the Persian lambs. The rain had driven everybody indoors, and though they turned back in pursuit directly, the pig had got a good lead now, and skirting Big Side at the gallop, it turned the corner by the swimming bath. Never again, it told itself, would it get such a chance of running gloriously amuck, and when its shrewd pink eyes caught sight of a door ajar in Fellowes' House, it darted through and into the corridor, where it espied another door not closed.

It was in this fashion that it introduced itself to the Junior Common Room, which, despite the elements, was only occupied by Fairbrother and Legge, who being larger in body and more venerable in years than any other junior in the House, had long asserted a prescriptive right there, and expelled with violence all challengers. Absorbed just now in an exciting game of draughts, neither looked up when the door opened. But both growled savagely.

Snarled Fairbrother, "Clear out, whoever you are!"

Cried Legge, "I'll slay you!"

They were stupefied next moment when the draught-board was sent flying, and a large, dripping body rushed between them. Fairbrother recovered himself and was about to hurl an inkpot at it—but he found the room filled with a noisy company, and himself clutched tightly by two very wet arms.

"You leave it alone!" he heard Gage crying to him. "It's Parker's pig."

In their excitement none of them observed a tall youth, with thoughtful eyes and thick, square shoulders, who, attracted by the commotion, had halted in the doorway, and was smiling dryly. The spectacle was certainly unusual.

There were Gage and Ellis in a posture of defence before a huge, ungainly object penned in the corner. Pools of water were forming round it, and a boy whose back resembled Willett's was on his knees, endeavouring to dry it with a handkerchief. A second glance revealed to the onlooker that the object was a pig, and the hoarse bass of its grunts provided an accompaniment to the more tremolo tumult of the scrum round Fairbrother and Legge. On the table danced the Maggot, like a maniac, and bawled a catch which was in vogue just then:—

> I don't suppose we'll do it again
> For months and months and months. . .

The Maggot sang deliriously, and the others took up the strain:—

> I don't suppose we'll do it again
> For months and months and months!
> It's over a year ago,
> And we've only done it once;
> I don't suppose we'll do it again
> For months and months and months!

"No, I'm sure you won't."

This came from the onlooker in the doorway. He had not raised his voice to speak to them, but everybody heard it. The effect was magical.

The Maggot scrambled down and stood in meek embarrassment. Instantaneously the scrum broke up and dissipated, some edging aside, others remaining stock still where they were, but all assuming innocent expressions. Gage and Ellis dropped their hands, and only Willett industriously pursued the task he had been busy with. He dabbed and mopped the sopping pig still.

The new comer spoke a second time, in the same cold, even tones:—

"Whose pig is that?"

"If you please, Penn," Gage said modestly, "it's Parker's."

"Who chevied it here?"

"Please, we did," came the subdued voices of Gage and Ellis, Willett and the Maggot. Simpson Minor had already slipped away.

Penn looked round the room. "Oh, very good," said he. "Legge, you will find Parker, and tell him to fetch his pig. I'll stay here till you bring him." He scrutinised the culprits one by one. "You four," he bade, "you four

will go straight off to my study. You will wait there till I come."

They departed—very meekly.

CHAPTER II

PATER BOVO DROPS A HINT

ON this same afternoon, the Reverend John Bullock, head master, was resting in his study and regretting that the Christmas holidays were over. He had ruled Kellcaster, to its supreme advantage, for more than twenty years, but he was unable in the frankness of his soul to recall a time when he had not appreciated holidays. He enjoyed them as much as anyone in the school.

The head master was a man of generous proportions—*teres atque rotundus*—and of genial habit. Although his beard was now quite white, he carried his seventy-three good inches as straightly as the youngest, and the lines about his firm, clean-shaven lips were not such lines as weariness or failing powers imprint. Mr. Bullock's was a pleasant mouth, and betrayed a very virile satisfaction with the world as he found it, and with that small corner in particular which he ruled.

Mr. Bullock was satisfied with Kellcaster, and Kellcaster was more than satisfied with him. It goes without saying that he was perfectly aware that behind his back they called him "Pater Bovo," and it is probable that in secret he enjoyed the nickname.

Once, however, it had troubled Mrs. Bullock, till her husband, as they say, assured her he would much rather his boys should call him "Pater Bovo" than by anything so colourless as "the old man"—a vulgar term, he said, and one as suited to a gaoler as a schoolmaster.

"But Bovo, my dear!" she had protested. "Bovo!"

"*Bos*—an ox—a bullock," smiled the Reverend John.

This Saturday afternoon, as he rested in his study—a comfortable place, sagely cloistered from the noises of the quad and lined with volumes not confined to learning—Pater Bovo was regretting that the holidays had gone, and ruminating on the term before him. He rose presently with a sigh, and crossing to his writing desk selected two letters from the drifts of correspondence which always littered it. He sat down again with these, and began gravely to consider them. Presently their contents seemed to trouble him.

He was thus engaged when a tap upon the door was followed by the noiseless entrance of old Parker, but newly returned from the recovering of his pig.

Parker, weather-beaten and wizened, hid deep in his heart a veneration which was almost worship for his master, to whom, before Mrs. Parker and his crony, Sergeant Cutlack, he alluded reverently as *'im*. Outwardly, he was phlegmatic and precise.

He cleared his throat and waited.

"Yes?" inquired Mr. Bullock.

"Can Mr. Penn see you, if you please, sir?"

"Penn? That's strange, Parker. I was just thinking of him. Yes, show him in."

"It's old Mr. Penn, if you please, sir," answered Parker.

"What, the boy's father, Parker?"

"No, sir. The young gentleman what they used to call Old Penn, sir."

Pater Bovo shook his head, and regarded the ancient with humorous disapproval. "For a man, Parker," he observed at length, "who has grown grey with me in the service of an educational institution, you abuse the relative pronoun abominably."

"If you please, sir," assented Parker.

"The young gentleman *whom* they used to call Old Penn," suggested Bovo, with a twinkle.

"Yessir. The young gentleman whom they used to call Old Penn."

"Then send him in."

The youth who entered (and who, *en passant*, dug Parker with stealthy glee between the ribs) might have been recognised in counterpart on any day on the High at Oxford or the Cambridge Backs. Typically an undergraduate, well-favoured and assured, he advanced to the head master as one who, while certain of his welcome, has not forgotten that he treads on holy ground. He had left the school too recently for that.

"And where have you sprung from?" smiled Pater Bovo, when the two had shaken hands.

"I spent the vac. in Leipsic, sir," said Penn.

"Then you weren't at home for Christmas?"

"No, sir."

"So you haven't seen your brother?"

"No. When I got back last Wednesday, sir, he'd just left home for here."

"Ah," said Mr. Bullock, slowly. "Then you want the matron to put you up for the week-end, I suppose? To look round the old place again?"

The blue eyes of his visitor beamed brightly. That was exactly what he *was* wanting, and it was just like good old Pater Bovo, he reflected, to save a man the awkwardness of asking.

"Sir, jolly good of you," he said.

Dancing upon the table, Moorgate started a song which the others took up, while the pig grunted hoarsely in the corner. In the excitement no one noticed a tall youth who had halted in the doorway and was thoughtfully watching this unusual spectacle.

"It's strange," continued the head master, "but I was thinking of your brother when you appeared."

"How's the youngster framing, sir?" said Penn.

Pater Bovo smiled again. "A year and a term since you left school, Penn?" he inquired, dryly.

"Last term began my second year at Cambridge, sir."

"Well, for a healthy animal of eighteen the youngster, as—ahem—now of course he must appear to you, is framing tolerably well. You remember Norton?"

"You mean the captain of the school, sir. He followed Wagstaffe."

"Who followed you. Well, Norton," continued Mr. Bullock, as he tapped one of the letters in his lap which slipped promptly to the floor—"no, never mind, Penn, leave it there—Norton isn't coming back. So your brother——"

The other sprang up with a smothered exclamation.

"Will be captain after all, sir!" he ejaculated.

"He'll be captain after all, Penn. As his brothers have been before him. Yes, I'm glad of it. Penn, how many of you brothers have been at Kellcaster?"

"Six, sir—with the youngster."

"And five of you have been captains of the school."

"Yes, sir; five of us."

Mr. Bullock reflected for a moment. "That's so," he answered, musingly. "I remember five of you. I should think, Penn, that your family holds a record. And certainly a record for good service. No school could wish for five better captains than you Penns have made."

"You trained us, sir," said Penn, in just such tones as he might have said, "It's raining, sir."

"Why, yes," said Pater Bovo, and his eyes were twinkling. "All of you good material, Penn. Lots of bone and sense and sinew to be worked upon. Do you remember what I said to you when your brother brought you to this room a very shy child—well, some hundred years ago?"

"Oh, rather, sir," Penn answered, readily. "'Little birds that can sing but won't sing must be made to sing,' you said. My brother told me afterwards you always said that to new kids."

"Oh, very likely," Pater Bovo smiled. "We all get into ruts, you know, Penn. But about this brother of yours. How did he take it when Norton beat him for the captaincy?"

"He never said a word about it, sir."

"To none of you at home?"

"To nobody. The mater was a bit cut up. But he kept mum."

"Ah," said Pater Bovo, meaningly. "Well, now he'll be captain, after all. The last of his line, eh?"

"The last of his line, sir," Penn repeated.

There was a pause while Pater Bovo eyed him. "The boys will hear on Monday, Penn," he said. "I wonder if you have any influence with your brother. In some respects he is unlike the rest of you. He is more reserved. I sometimes think, Penn, that he has more character than any of you."

So far as he was personally concerned, Penn saw no reason to demur. His virtues had been always on the surface.

"And I fear, Penn, that your brother was more chagrined than appeared when Norton beat him for the captaincy. Last term he slackened off considerably. We thought him rather strange."

"Slacked off in his work, sir?"

"No, not so much that; but in every other way. He shut himself up from the other boys, like Achilles sulking in his tent. Why, I've no idea—except the reason I suggest. I believe the school got that impression. But of course we may all have misjudged him, for he is not an easy lad to read. In a position of peculiar responsibility he might have some surprises for us."

"Of the right sort, sir," insisted Penn.

Pater Bovo shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I hope so," he said, dryly. "He's the sort of boy who'd take the unexpected line if things were going against him; the hardest line, Penn. Or if he were confronted with anything—er—well, say beyond the common."

"I don't quite follow, sir," said Penn, and looked as puzzled as he owned.

Pater Bovo glanced queerly at the letter on his lap. "No, I'm sure you don't," he said. "But I mustn't keep you any longer. You'll come to tea with Mrs. Bullock and me to-morrow?"

He rose and extended his hand, an action which sent the second letter fluttering to the floor. "No, let it lie," he smiled.

And Penn departed puzzled. He wondered what old Pater Bovo meant by inquiring if he had influence with his brother, and suggesting that there might be some scope for its exercise. But there—that was just like him, he reflected.

He loved to drop his letters—and his hints! And to leave them lying!

But as soon as he had gone, the head master stooped painfully, and picking up the letter that had fallen last, he read it through again. Here and there a line seemed to amuse him. At others he grew grave. And finally he rang for Parker.

"Parker, ascertain please if a new boy called Maxon Rope has come yet?"

Parker was omniscient and ubiquitous. "Mr. Maxon Rope, sir," he said promptly. "A new boy in the School House, sir. Yessir. He came down by the five-twenty, sir."

"Where is he now?"

"With Mr. Dale, I think, sir. Shall I send for him?"

"Ah, thank you. As soon as Mr. Dale has finished w th him, please."

He paused, regarding the old fellow shrewdly. "Did he strike you, Parker, as—er—a curious boy in any way?"

It had been a joke in Kellcaster for many years that if old Parker had known Greek and Latin he would have been Second Master long ago. They insisted that Pater Bovo had no secrets from him, and that when you wanted to discover what the Head would think of anything, your simplest way was first to sound old Parker. But this was a method more talked about than practised. For the ancient wa; a difficult man to pump.

For the briefest instant now he seemed to smile. Then he was a graven image once more. "Curious, sir?" he solemnly repeated. "Well, now you mention it, he does seem a trifle out of the common—for a new boy, sir."

CHAPTER III

OLD PENN HAS REASON TO COMPLAIN

EAGER as he was to carry the good news to his brother—not to be announced formally till Monday morning—old Penn hung back from approaching the more difficult hinterland of Pater Bovo's hints. It was obvious that Dennis had been slacking, and that he was required to exert his influence: to admonish Dennis fraternally.

If the person to be admonished had been someone else's brother, he could have managed well enough, he thought. But Dennis was a curious chap; to Dennis it would sound too awfully like preaching!

While several years divided Jim and Dennis Penn from their elder brothers, between themselves there was a difference of two years only. Naturally they had gravitated together. They were exceedingly good chums, but Jim could not recall that Dennis had ever come to him for counsel; on the contrary, Dennis had usually done the thinking for them both, and Dennis had very often taken the lead. Jim felt a dim conviction that in some respects he was the younger of the two.

So he was not particularly attracted to his task. It had been easy enough in the study to talk of Dennis as "the youngster," but how amused Pater Bovo had appeared! And how many years was it since he had called his brother "youngster" to his face? No, he could not see himself exactly preaching to old Den.

Still—he had been captain of Kellcaster himself. And Pater Bovo sort of wanted him to put a word in.

He made his opportunity next morning, as they paced outside the School House studies.

"I don't see," Dennis had just said, "that I've anything in particular to be proud of, being captain. I didn't beat Norton. I've only stepped into his shoes."

"Oh, rot!" returned Old Penn.

His brother paced on quietly. He had the habit—it was one of the respects in which he was the elder of the two—of thinking well before he spoke. Presently he halted, and searched Jim with those thoughtful eyes of his.

"Old man, why don't you get it off your chest?" he smiled.

"What do you mean?" said Jim Penn, with a start.

"What you talked about with Pater Bovo. I saw last night that he'd upset you some way. Out with it."

It seemed to Old Penn that Dennis was assuming control of the situation. He must put his foot down.

"Hang it all, Den," he said, stiffly, "you might remember I'm your senior, and that I'm at the 'Varsity."

"All serene," laughed Penn.

"And blow it, man, I don't want to preach, but you've jolly well got to buck up—for the honour of the family."

"Oh," said Penn, quietly.

"What I mean is, you don't seem a bit keen about being captain. In fact, you seem rather to resent the job. You seem sick that Norton's gone."

"Yes, it's rough on Norton. Well?"

"Well!" echoed Old Penn, warming with his brother's coolness. "Well, Den, confound you—you've just got to buck up, for the honour

of the Penns and of the school. It's not the sort of thing one yaps about. You drive me to it."

It was some minutes before Dennis answered.

"No, it isn't; it isn't the sort of thing one jaws about," he said. "But perhaps one thinks about it. Jim, Pater Bovo's been putting you up to this?"

"He said you'd slacked," Old Penn replied, uneasily.

"He's absolutely right. He always is. Perhaps I was keener than you fancy on being the sixth of us to skipper. Perhaps I was fed-up when Norton pilled me. I did slack off——"

"I guess I might have done," Old Penn put in.

"Last term I didn't keep such a tight hand on the fellows as a vice-skipper should. And not being a whale at games, like the rest of us, you know, I lost some ground."

The Penns from one to five had been mighty men of sport, and a halo of supremacy at games hung round their heads at Kellcaster. But while the sixth and last had inherited, so to speak, their stature, bone, and muscle, the resemblance ended there. He had shown nothing of the traditional Penn excellence in cricket or in football, less from physical ability than from taste or instinct. He had never appeared keen on games. He only wore his second eleven tie.

Old Penn, who had been tried for the Cambridge freshers both at Soccer and Cricket (and hoped this May to make his century in the Seniors' match), frowned at his brother's words and his reflections.

"You take it beastly coolly, Den," he said. "Why aren't you keener?"

His brother shrugged his shoulders, as one resonant note struck from the clock above Big School, and was flung back sharply from the buttressed walls of the library—an acoustic curiosity which provides the well-known Kellcaster echo.

To Old Penn now it brought a vast relief from a situation which embarrassed him. "Dinner!" he exclaimed. And a moment later, plaintively, "The same old goat?"

Roast beef is always "goat" at Kellcaster, and is reported by those who have subsisted on it to be of a more stringy and less meaty texture than any other to be found on earth. This is, quite possibly, a libel. And at any rate, although as a 'Varsity man who knows what's what at last, Old Penn felt bound to sigh when his brother answered that it *was* the same old goat, and to pull a very wry face, you may be sure he would have suffered secret disappointment if it had not been; and he managed, somehow, to send his plate up twice. "Ah, but much better than it used to be," he said, sapiently, when Dennis chipped him.

After dinner, in remarkably good form, he found himself the centre of the circle on the palaver ground beneath the cloisters, where in dry weather the prefects bring their rugs and chairs, and talk. And here Old Penn was soon retailing the latest news of Kellcaster at Cambridge and proving a *raconteur* of spirit.

He told them how Wagstaffe was "priceless" as the President of the Sexcentenary at Peterhouse; how Greenway castigated Cam's sluggish stream; how Box-Pendleton still looked as nice as ever; how Lazenby was grinding in his lair; how Martin haunted the "meat shops" and sounded his acquaintance with a stethoscope; how the voice of Cartwright had been lifted in the Union; how the proctors' eyes had fallen on Pell's rooms in Petty Cury.

"You're in college now?" Lynge interjected. "It's nicer, isn't it?"

The oracle reflected for a moment. "In some ways, yes, it is," he said at last. "Though I was pretty comfy when I kept in Tennis Court Terrace. But in coll. you see more of the other men. My rooms are on the ground floor and near the porter's lodge. I'm not so sure I'm keen on them. They're haunted."

They laughed at him.

"Oh, not by a ghost; oh, no. But by townees, and by duns and all sorts of lively specimens. They want the man who had the rooms before me. They can't find him."

"But why?"

"Because he's gone down; he's evaporated. He came up for one term. Then he skipped."

"They don't know his address?" cried Lynge, incredulously. His father was an eminent K.C., from whom he had imbibed a love of cross-examination. He was always "wanting to know."

"They're not even certain that the fellow's gone. Most of them won't believe me when I tell them so. Which isn't so rum, you see, because it's uncommon strange for a man to be up and down again like lightning. But it's rotten for me."

Cried Lynge: "But what I want to know is this: Why doesn't the porter tell them his address?"

"He doesn't know; nor does the tutor," snapped Old Penn, remembering how he had loved to suppress Lynge two years ago.

"Nobody knows. A college, Lynge," he continued, grandly, "is not exactly a school. The men in coll. know nix about this chap. They only know that his name was Spalding; that he came up for one term and went down again; that he looked as meek and innocent as you make 'em——"

"But the men of his own year?" persisted Lynge. "They know, surely?"

"Spalding hadn't a year. He was a by-termer, I've told you."

"I see," said Lynge, mendaciously.

"Spalding came up in the May term, the last term of my first year. He was in coll., I was out; and I don't think I ever set eyes on him. If I did in Hall or chapel, of course, I'd no idea who he was; I couldn't tell him from Adam. But oh! I wish I could put my hand on him!"

"A beauty!" Lynge exclaimed.

"Priceless. Absolutely priceless. He played old Harry with the townees and the shop-keepers, and he's left me a legacy of annoyance. I'm never free from johnnies who want his blood. By Jove! I think I've reason to complain."

Absorbed in this sparkling recital none of them had noticed a new comer who had stolen quietly down the cloisters within earshot. He had been listening to every word, and now and then the story made him smile. But he drew a pace too near in his excitement, and this proved his undoing; for Lynge saw and called him sharply.

Sauntering up without a trace of diffidence, he favoured the company with a comprehensive grin, which displayed two rows of white and even teeth. He was short and slim, with sharp nose and lips, set in a face just round enough when he was smiling to lend him a very boyish air. But the down upon his upper lip betrayed that he was older than might seem, and his remarkable self-possession bore this out.

"What's your name?" Lynge asked him.

"My name," the stranger answered very airily, "is Norval. On the Grampian Hills—say, any of you fellows know where those old tussocks are?"

Up jumped Lynge at this astonishing rejoinder. "I asked your name," he repeated in his stiffest manner.

"And if you won't allow it's Norval we'll lay on Maxon Rope," said the other with a grin.

"You belong here?"

"I do some."

Lynge gestured to the company to leave this freak to him. "Now attend," he said, severely. "You're a new boy?"

"Yep."

"You came yesterday?"

"Yep."

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen."

"No nonsense," Lynge retorted. "How old are you?"

"Oh, cut it out," the other smiled. "Eighteen."

"Then what are you doing at Kellcaster as a new kid?" Lynge's voice and temper were both rising. "And what do you mean by hanging about and listening to our conversation? You've no right here on Sunday afternoon. Whose House are you?"

For thirty seconds perhaps the new boy scrutinised him reflectively, with an earnest and inquiring look which indicated amazement at the mode of his reception. And then without a word he strolled away.

Lynge sprang after him, and a term ago Dennis Penn would not have troubled to interfere. But now they glanced at one another curiously as he called Lynge back.

"Let him go," he said; "he doesn't know the ropes. He speaks like an American, but he hasn't got an accent."

Old Penn shook his head. "No, none," he said. "But I bet he's a Yank."

"But, anyhow," cried Lynge, returning sulkily, "what's a chap of eighteen doing at Kellcaster as a new kid? That's what *I* want to know?"

"Well, who's for tea?" smiled Penn.

Which reminded Old Penn that he was due at Pater Bovo's.

CHAPTER IV

A CLOUD ON THE HORIZON

WHEN it learned on Monday morning that Norton was not returning, and that Penn had succeeded to the captaincy, Kellcaster received the news at first with sheer dismay (for Norton would be badly missed upon the playing fields) and next with simmering excitement. Norton was a difficult man to follow. How, they speculated, would Penn shape in his shoes?

Rottenly—said some; and, challenged, would inquire with a shrug whether Penn's best friends would deny that he had failed as second captain, or that he was a "curious cuss," and no good to the school at games. He had been pretty humpy all last term, too, hadn't he? Well, who was likely to forget it?

There were others, of course—the slacksters

THE LAST OF HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

and the shirkers—who lamented Norton in the market-place, but in the seclusion of their studies were rejoicing. Theirs was an unholy satisfaction. *Consule Norton* their lot had been embittered. *Consule Penn* things promised to run easily.

Penn himself appeared to accept the situation with an indifference which the prefects failed to understand. He manifested no elation now that circumstances had put him on his brothers' throne, and this gave colour to Westinghouse's contention that Penn was a Socialist who had no use for the hereditary system.

More truth here than Westinghouse imagined—but from a very different point of view. For the new captain, had they known it, was feeling hampered by the family tradition; it was a bugbear because of its exactions. He remembered that if it is bad policy to swop horses in the middle of the stream, it is much worse to change captains in the middle of a year; that he must be judged invariably by comparison with Norton; and he felt that if he proved a failure that failure would be doubled, for not only would he let the school down, but his family also. Five Penns had left great names behind them; should he follow them indifferently he would spoil the record.

Yes, the hereditary fetish, Penn reflected, had its drawbacks.

He took charge, then, of the good ship Kellcaster without enthusiasm, but also without any reason to apprehend unusual breakers ahead. The skies, if not serene, were not threatening. And it was not until he had been a few days at the helm that the first small cloud revealed itself. It rose in an unexpected quarter.

For what captain would anticipate bad weather from the Odd-Ends, that remote corner of the playing-fields devoted to derelicts and miscellaneous small fry, where astonishing and energetic football can be witnessed?

"Who kicked that?" asked Penn, striding back. "I guess I did," said the American, with a queer smile. "I've no use for a football here."

Penn was passing the Odd-Ends one afternoon when his ears were greeted by an extraordinary uproar; shrieks of amusement, shouts of applause, and every now and then one clamant voice upraised, obviously issuing instructions. Unable to "place" this voice he stopped for a moment under the trees.

The first thing he noticed was the football lying neglected by the goal. And next he

made out that while some of them were spread about the ground, after the fashion of cricket outfields, others were clustered in the centre, where a small boy swung an Indian club, and behind him crouched the owner of the strident voice. The small boy swung again; apparently he hit something; the croucher screamed; and one of the outfields began to sprint.

Two reflections occurred at once to Penn. First, that this remarkable pursuit, whatever it might be, was not football. And, secondly, that the Odd-Ends were there to play football, and not the goat.

He strode out slowly, and a runner who was bearing wildly down upon him recognised the captain, and pulled up short. Then he began to slink away, while a nervous silence fell upon the rest.

"What do you mean," asked Penn, "by playing rounders here?"

"It isn't rounders," a voice cried airily from the background.

Penn looked up, and recognised the boy who had been crouching behind the club-swinger and instructing.

"It isn't rounders?" he demanded.

"Nope," incisively. "It's baseball."

"It's what?"

"It's baseball, sonnie. And I'm teaching them."

Then Penn recalled this person. This was the new fellow who had thrust himself upon the prefects last Sunday afternoon, and treated their resentment with such impertinent concern. He might have known that no one else would dare to call him "sonnie."

"Oh, you're teaching, are you?" he observed. "You're the new boy called Rope. You're American?"

The other nodded.

"And you made them chuck footer for your beastly baseball?"

"Football's slow," Rope drawled. "There's no sand in it. Say, look here; I'll show you how——"

But Penn cut him short, and turned sharply on the company. "Get on with your footer at once," he bade. "Fetch the ball, one of you. And you, Rope, come with me."

He turned upon his heel, expecting Rope to follow. But the American thrust his hands into his pockets with a look of bland surprise, and stood doggedly where he was. They glanced at Penn's receding figure, and somebody kicked off.

Like a flash Rope's hands were out of his pockets, and swooping on the ball he sent it with a huge punt after Penn. It came to earth beside him, missing his head narrowly, and the colour was mounting to his face as he strode back to the touch-line.

"Who kicked that?"

This time he was answered immediately. "I guess I did," said Rope, with a queer smile. "I've no use for a football here. I'm going to teach them baseball."

Penn could hardly have been less astounded if Rope had struck him in the face. The Odd-Ends was the last place where even the rawest prefect would anticipate impertinence. A new boy was the last person who might be expected to raise the flag of mutiny. Mutiny and outrage offered in such a quarter and at such hands to the captain of the school was surely without precedent at Kellcaster!

Out went Penn's long arm and seized Rope by the collar. Up went Penn's knee to the small of the other's back; and so, willy nilly, Rope was propelled after the ball, and made to retrieve it and return it to the players. Perhaps he was expecting his release then, but instead he found himself jerked round and commanded to march back to the School House.

He clenched his fists and hesitated an instant. While all eyes were upon him, his own were measuring Penn. But what he saw of Penn's big frame and shoulders must have satisfied him that he would come out second best in any physical encounter; and without a word he turned and went before his captor. But he walked jauntily, and began to whistle.

"Stop that!" bade Penn, and, as they passed under the archway, "Straight down the corridor; my study's at the end there. Are you mad, Rope?"

This last was when the door was shut on them, and Rope, with his incredible impertinence, was dropping into a chair.

"Have you ever been at school before?" said Penn, as he jerked him to his feet.

Rope looked at him, his head poised, his bland face very puzzled. He seemed to be in quite the best of tempers, while Penn had difficulty in restraining his own.

"I'm sorry if you're stung?" said Rope.

"Ah! Well, presently I'll do the stinging," returned Penn. "I'm afraid you're up against a lot of trouble, Rope, if you've never been at school before. This time I'll make allowance for you; but you've got to learn that you're a person of no importance whatsoever——"

"I'm as old as you are," Rope broke in, and smoothed his upper lip.

"But I happen to be captain; and you're only a new boy. New boys must keep their place, even if they have got a moustache of sorts."

There was a pause, while Rope appeared to cogitate. Then he smiled slowly, and remarked:—

"Say; I'd like to discuss one or two old notions of that sort. You're not too busy to talk?"

This novel version of the situation from a person hailed for summary execution would have astonished Penn had he been capable of any more astonishment. But he recognised that the curious creature before him was beyond the pale of ordinary convention.

"Of course," he said, "you're sane?"

"Yep, sane enough," snapped Rope. "But I'd like to know if I'm seriously expected to behave like a kiddie of eleven, to play games with them, and to do what I'm told by every little dandy of a prefect."

"You are," said Penn.

"But I'm in the Lower Sixth!"

"Then you won't fag in the customary sense, but you'll do what the prefects tell you, all the same."

"I will?"

"Of course you will."

"That's where you're wrong," Rope answered sharply. "It fixes me why I should take my orders from a fellow younger than myself. And I am not going to play football with all the bone-heads in the school."

"I don't know what a bone-head is," said Penn, "and I won't trouble to inquire. But next time you're playing footer you won't switch off to baseball—see?"

Rope looked him in the face, but made no answer.

"And you won't air your independence before me?"

"No," smiled Rope, in an accent that implied a question rather than submission. "No, Penn?"

"And until you've been at Kellcaster a year, if you stay so long," Penn continued evenly, "there are certain minor rules of ours that you'll observe. You won't wear your trousers turned up as you're wearing them now; you won't wear coloured ties; you won't put your cap on at an angle——"

"Who says I won't?" flamed Rope.

"I do," Penn assured him. "You see, my man, the sooner you're told these things the better. Did you ever read any Roman history?"

Rope nodded, biting his under-lip.

"Well, the Romans, you'll remember, had certain sumptuary laws on dress and so forth. Most English schools have regulations on somewhat similar lines, which new boys have to learn."

"I've got a book of the Kellcaster regulations here," cried Rope, and drew the little volume from his pocket. "There's nothing about caps and turned-up trousers!"

"I dare say not," Penn smiled. "The law's unwritten. But it is a law."

"Who made it?"

"Tradition," answered Penn.

Rope began to laugh. "Tradition! Oh!" he laughed. "I've no use for your tradition."

"Perhaps not," said Penn, his thoughtful eyes upon him. "But tradition has a use for you. Tradition's going to take you in hand, Rope, and see what it can make of you. Presently it will turn you out into quite a decent member of society. You're going through the mill, my man."

"What mill?" Rope asked, pertly.

"Our mill at Kellcaster. A mill that's going to grind you small, unless you behave yourself. A mill that's going to hurt you, Rope."

"You don't josh me!" Rope laughed.

"But if you will avoid Yankee expressions," Penn continued evenly, "and if you keep your head, Rope, you'll fit into your place all right, and have a very good time here. Don't be impertinent. Don't bounce. And remember that you're nobody just yet. And now, Rope, you can go."

But as Rope reached the door he called him back.

"And don't forget, Rope, that next time I shall use a different argument."

"What argument?"

"The stick," Penn said, incisively. "And plenty of it."

The other's eyes narrowed, he flushed hotly. "Say, you go nap on this," he flung back at Penn. "That old mill you're wagging ain't going to grind me much. You bet it ain't."

He went and slammed the door behind him, leaving Penn half sorry that he had been so lenient. His eye was on the cupboard where his cane reposed.

Rope strolled moodily across the quad, when suddenly on either side of him sprang up from nowhere a small figure of dishevelled appearance, which kept pace with him at wary arm's-length, and eyed him with the liveliest show of interest. He stopped, and made a grab at these two apparitions, but they ducked, and as soon as he went on, rejoined him.

"See his moustache!" the one cried to the other.

This dramatic appearance of the Persian lambs was in no way unpremeditated. For days they had been watching for their opportunity to explore this *terra nova* of a new fellow with a moustache! They had told each other Rope must certainly be investigated, but with the strategy that often marked their movements, had refrained from rushing at him, biding the time which should deliver him into their hands. And now that time had come.

"Whew! I'll bet Penn's been giving it you!" said Gage, with a pantomime he deemed appropriate.

Rope stopped dead. "Say here," he said. "You put an egg into your shoe and beat it—quick."

"But I haven't got an egg," said Gage.

"And if he had," cried Ellis, "he'd rather eat it."

"That means scoot, hop, run away," Rope answered, as he moved again. "I'm busy."

"Well, so are we. We're going to show you round."

He eyed them angrily, and raised his hand; but the Persian lambs retreated only for a pace or two, where they stood, returning look for look, but poised for instant flight if necessary. Rope's irritation yielded to amusement,

"All right," he laughed at last. "We're quits. Where are you little beggars going to show me?"

"The stink-shop first," Gage answered. "The key was in the door just now when we passed it. Come on; there's no one there."

A cautious scrutiny revealed that he was right, and, once inside, he assumed the *rôle* of demonstrator.

"You see, Rope," he explained, "you jam some stinks into a tube and they go off. That," pointing to a bottle of quicksilver, "is H_2SO_4, and if you mix it with NO_3 it turns to hydrogen. And that stuff over there——"

His memory failed him and he turned to Ellis.

"Oh, that," said Ellis—"why, that's sodium. You do dodges with it in a bell-jar to make oxygen. Oxygen bleaches, don't you know."

Rope showed no disposition to dispute this, so he was led next to an old deal table, pushed on one side at the far end and covered from top to bottom with inscriptions of every kind. When his attention had been directed to some verses which appeared to celebrate the breaking of a certain carboy of *aqua distillata*, Gage pointed to a couplet in another corner:—

HNO_3 and H_2SO_4
Are enough to knock a chap on the floor.

"Yours, I suppose?" was Rope's comment as he read.

"Oh, no," Gage answered proudly. "The Maggot wrote that; he's a poet, you know. It took him only ten minutes to hatch up!"

"Ten!" expostulated Ellis. "Only five, Gage!"

At last, when they had exhausted the fascinations of the lab., the Persian lambs exchanged glances, and Ellis sidled nearer to Rope.

"Rope, there's one thing about stinks," he remarked cordially, "that's jolly queer, you know. They make a chap so beastly peckish. Eh, Gage?"

"Beastly!" agreed Gage. "I don't know how you feel, Rope, but I could easily do a yankee-pankee."

Rope was feeling on good terms with himself, and thoroughly enjoying his convoy. So having ascertained that there was no personal application in the name of the edible they instanced, he remarked that he could do a bit himself.

"All right," said they. "Come on."

But no sooner were their faces set square towards the tuck-shop than they overtook a youth with remarkably thick legs. "Maggot," cried the Persian lambs, "we want you."

"I'm busy," said the Maggot. "I'm hatching poetry."

"But it's Rope," Gage said persuasively. "The man with a moustache, you know. He's taking us to tucker."

A poet has been found here and there who will suffer the divine afflatus to come between himself and nourishment. But the poets of Kellcaster were not of such mean order, and certainly the Maggot was not.

"You idiots!" he exclaimed, with kindling eye. "Why didn't you say so at first?"

So the company of four proceeded, and in the far corner of the tuck-shop espied two small boys who contemplated thoughtfully two clean and empty plates. The Persian lambs steered straight to these, exclaiming, "Got him!"

Willett and Simpson Minor jumped up without demur: one fetched a plate for Rope; the other sundry delicacies from the counter. "Jolly good of you to stand us, Rope," said they.

"A put-up job," smiled Rope, and placed half a crown upon the table. "Well, when you're through with that we're going to chat."

For, studying the Persian lambs, it had occurred to him that there were possibilities in Kellcaster which he had hitherto overlooked, and that there were more ways than one of his getting his own back upon Penn. Already his plans were forming when presently all six adjourned to a more secluded corner.

"Say," he began, fingering his upper lip, "Penn's a bit stiff, eh?"

"A sarcastic beast," declared the Maggot, mournfully. "Gage, you remember how he dropped on us for rescuing Parker's pig?"

"I *do*," assented Gage.

Rope eyed them, and proceeded with caution. "There's too much dropping-on altogether at Kellcaster. You Junior School men are drilled into machines. It's bad for you."

"How bad for us?" asked Simpson.

"It crushes your individuality," said Rope, "it kills your spirit. Take Moorgate here, for instance. Say, Moorgate—you can't write poetry when a prefect's lamming into you?"

The Maggot's answer was a sheepish grin.

"All you fellows have talent, in one way or another," Rope went on "but it's crushed out of you by fagging; you're slaves, you know, to a system. When a chap goes to school he expects naturally to be bossed about by masters——"

"That's what they're for," said Simpson Minor, piously.

"Of course. But he ought not to be ordered here, there, and everywhere by a pack of other fellows. He oughtn't to be ordered how to dress; and how to put his cap on; and what sort of a tie to wear; and not to turn his trousers up."

Rope ended with a sneer; he stroked his moustache; and the others tried to look as old as possible.

"Take another thing," he said—"the study system. Why should some fellows have studies and others not?"

"But studies aren't for kids!" cried Gage.

"Why not? Why shouldn't they be? That's just what's so ridiculous," said Rope, impressively. "A kid wants sheltering much more than a big fellow; he's more delicate and newer from home; he can't rough it like the big man. So if the studies aren't sufficient to go round——"

"You mean, the kids should have them first," said Ellis.

"Of course; that's only just. If I'd my way I'd give the kids the first call on the studies, and let the seniors draw lots for what's left."

"*You* haven't got a study yet?" asked Willett.

"No, although I'm in the Sixth—— I mean," Rope corrected himself, hastily, "because I'm a new boy. But do you think I'd take one if I had the chance while you fellows are left out?"

"You wouldn't?" Gage exclaimed.

"Well, would I? Is it likely?"

As he went on to dilate upon his theme, painting a glowing picture of emancipation, his audience began to think there must be something in it. The Persian lambs, at no time distinguished for docility, were soon convinced that Kellcaster must be the hardest school in Britain.

"The fellows wouldn't stand it anywhere else?" they questioned.

"Of course not," Rope said, laughing.

"But how have they got over it?"

"By showing a little firmness—by striking."

"It's wrong to strike," said Simpson.

"Not for your rights," cried Rope. "Out in the world people are always striking for their rights. They strike for wages, for votes, for shorter hours of work, for all sorts of things. But we needn't go so far as that, you know."

"Then I don't see how we're going to buck things up," said Gage.

Rope eyed them gravely, and he dropped his voice.

"Look here. We're going to form a little league——"

"Like a footer league?"

"Don't be funny. The few of us are going to form a private league, and you can sound some other men of ginger——"

"Of ginger? Red-haired chaps?"

"Of ginger—that means spirit, pluck. Sound a few like that and bring them in. I'll be president. You'll be officers."

With a glance at Gage and Ellis he challenged their support. They jumped at the idea.

"A league!" they cried. "A real young league!"

"Yep—*the* idea," said Rope. "And we'll call ourselves, by Jove! the Birds of Freedom."

The Persian lambs seized Simpson's cap and flung it high into the air. "The Birds of Freedom!" they repeated. "We'll make things hum!"

"We will," said Maxon Rope. "Sonnies, you lay on that."

But Simpson Minor looked a little frightened.

(To be continued.)

THE SEASON'S NEW ISSUES

THE stamp-collecting season now nearing its close has been a great one for new issues. Numerically, perhaps, the novelties have not exceeded the average, but in very many cases they have been of quite exceptional interest. We have seen such ultra-conservative stamp-issuing countries as Turkey and Egypt breaking away from their traditional methods to produce large series of handsome and well-engraved pictorial stamps. Possibly they were inspired by the example set by Austria, Russia, China, etc. Nowadays, indeed, the large rather than the small nations are going in for pictorial subjects and elaborate portraiture on their postage stamps, while here and there the smaller States are becoming more and more conservative in the variety and number of their postal issues. San Marino, for instance, apart from two supplementary values produced in 1907, has had no new issue since 1903; and so it is with many of the smaller stamp-issuing states. A conspicuous example is the little Principality of Monaco, which has had only two issues of stamps in twenty-eight years, the present issue having been current for twenty-two years!

The King George penny stamp for Australia.

Not only have we had new issues to cope with this season, but new countries as well. In the Balkan Peninsula there is a spick-and-span new kingdom of Albania to be found room for in our albums. Several new Portuguese colonies have been "invented" for postage stamp purposes by subdividing existing Portuguese possessions. Tibet is now firmly established as a stamp-issuing State.

Possibly a chat about some of the principal new issues of the season may prove interesting and helpful to those philatelic Captainites who have failed to keep track of these things as they appeared.

ALBANIA, as the newest of European sovereign States, well deserves pride of place, apart from alphabetical considerations. First of all various Turkish stamps were overprinted—over-smudged would be a better word in this instance—with a double-headed eagle for use in Albania. There were separate types of overprint for home and foreign postage, the latter having, in addition to the eagle, the Turkish character "B." Then appeared an issue of regular stamps bearing the head of an Albanian patriot, Georges Castriota, who flourished in the fifteenth century. These stamps, five in number, have values expressed in "qint," stated to be the equivalent of centimes.

AUSTRALIAN COMMONWEALTH.—The much-talked-of "King George" penny stamp, originally promised for October last, made its appearance in December. The Government had ordered a million of the stamps, and these were directed to be divided equally between the six States of the Commonwealth, there being a further order that no individual customer at any post office should be supplied with more than six specimens of the stamp. Scenes almost amounting to riots occurred at many of the post offices in consequence, and the whole circumstances of the issue were regarded as most unsatisfactory, especially when it became known that only the first million stamps were to be printed from

New farthing and halfpenny stamps for Malta.

engraved plates, further printings being from electrotypes. The Postmaster-General of the Commonwealth explained, in the House of Representatives, that the Government's engraving plant was wanted exclusively for banknote purposes.

The penny stamp, which most of my readers will have seen before this number of THE CAPTAIN appears, is to be obtained in three quite distinct shades—namely, in a deep carmine red, and in two shades of pale carmine red.

A new value for Hong Kong.

There is talk of this stamp becoming a rarity, but that remains to be seen. If there should be no further printings from the steel plates, then the stamp is pretty certain to increase in value, and Captainites should meanwhile keep a tight hold on all the specimens that come their way. The deep shade of carmine red, I understand, is the scarcest of the three varieties.

BRITISH EMPIRE.—As regards British colonials generally, the most important new issues have been those for Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa. In the Rhodesian "King George" stamps, by the way, two very noteworthy varieties of shade have been remarked—the 2½*d.* stamp in what is described as a "pale, cloudy blue," and the 5*s.* value in a much deeper blue-green than the original printing. Among the most recent new colonial issues are the King George stamps for Malta; and these certainly are no improvement on the old, being of the rather crude type introduced for Grenada, British Honduras, etc., and known as the "1912 De La Rue key plate." Many will be sorry to say good-bye to the pretty little farthing stamp of Malta, with its dainty view of the harbour at Valetta. Another novelty is the 25 cents of Hong Kong, with head of King George. This is a value quite new to the Hong Kong list, probably due to some revision of the postal tariff. Several other Hong Kong "Georgians," completing the new set, are on the eve of issue at the moment of writing. Before leaving the subject of British colonials it may be well to mention that the names "Northern Nigeria" and "Southern Nigeria" will shortly disappear as separate stamp-issuing colonies. The whole of the Niger territories will now be brought under one administration, and future postage stamps will bear the inscription "Nigeria."

BOSNIA has been comparatively quiet of late. Her only contribution during recent months has been a set of four stamps (2, 6, 10, and 20 heller) issued by the Military Post Department. I am not quite clear how these are going to be classified, or, indeed, whether they are worthy of being chronicled as postage stamps at all. They are described as being intended for the payment of newspaper postage within the borders of Bosnia and also from Bosnia into Austria-Hungary. The labels are quite pretty ones, each bearing the same picture of a bonny Bosnian belle clad in the costume of the country.

BRAZIL.—It seems to be the accepted rule that the "reigning" President of the United States of Brazil, being debarred by custom from having his portrait on the current ordinary postage stamps, should be allowed the honour of adorning the official stamps—just as a sort of consolation prize. This was done in the case of the late President, Affonso Penna, whose head appeared on each of the 1907 officials, from 10 reis up to 10,000 reis; and now we have a portrait of the present head of the republic, President Hermes de Fonseca, on each of the new official stamps. These are sixteen in number, and range from 10 reis to a cool million reis. It is understood, however, that the very high values are only intended for revenue purposes.

CHINA.—The Republic of China—how funny it still sounds!—is now in possession of its own republican postage stamps, ranging in value from ½ cent to 5 dollars, the cent values having a picture of a Chinese junk, and the dollar denominations a view of a famous building, the Temple of Confucius. Postage-due stamps have also been issued, these being similar in size and general design to those of the imperial *régime*. Also an express delivery stamp—10 cents, green—has made its appearance.

CRETE has had a commemorative stamp to celebrate the union of Crete and Greece. The large, oblong stamp of 25 lepta, printed in black and blue, shows a view of Suda Bay.

Postage and postage due stamps of the Chinese Republic.

A CAPTAIN reader, A. W. J., Gunnersbury, has had a letter from a correspondent on the spot, describing how the post office at Canea was thronged with crowds eager to buy this stamp, and how the total number printed—three hundred thousand—was sold out in less than three days.

DENMARK.—The set of stamps with the head of the present ruler, King Christian X., is now complete from 5 öre to 1 krone. The King's

portrait is a profile-to-right. Strangely enough, there are two styles of printing, the öre values being typographed and the 1 öre printed from engraved plates.

DUTCH INDIES.—A change has been taking place in the oblong numeral stamps of low values, the background on which the large numeral of value appears being now left white instead of having horizontal lines of shading as heretofore. The 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7½ cents have appeared in the new style down to the time of writing, and only the ½c. and 2½c. are wanted to complete the set. For the higher values, a new style of Queen's Head stamp has been introduced, with palm trees appearing at either side of the portrait medallion.

New type of Dutch Indies showing white background.

Some of the new Egyptians.

EGYPT, for so many years faithful to the uniform "sphinx and pyramids" type of stamp, has now launched an entirely new series, with a different design for each value. The ten values from 1 to 200 milliemes, with their colours and designs, are as follows:—

1 millieme sepia (Feluccas on the Nile).
2 milliemes green (Goddess Isis).
3 mils orange yellow (Ras-el-Tin Palace, Alexandria).
4 mils vermilion (Pyramids of Ghizah).
5 mils lake (the Sphinx).
10 ,, cobalt (Colossi of Thebes).
20 ,, olive (Pylon of Karnak).
50 ,, lilac (the Citadel, Cairo)
100 ,, slate grey (Rock Temple of Abu-Simbel).
200 ,, maroon (Great Assouan Dam).

The FRENCH COLONIAL novelties include new sets for Dahomey, and Ivory Coast.

GREECE, whose stamps have so sadly deteriorated since the days of the beautiful "Paris prints" of 1861, is now going from bad to worse. The stamps of the annexed design, together with various other classical subjects, which first made their appearance in 1911, are now being reissued in lithographical form. The 1, 3, 5, and 10 lepta have so far appeared. Philatelically, these stamps are of considerable interest, for they reintroduce to the collector a practically obsolete form of separation—namely, zigzag rouletting.

HOLLAND has followed the lead of Austria, Russia, etc., in giving us a postage stamp portrait gallery of the Dutch sovereigns, past and present. There is a set of twelve stamps of large size, 2½ cents to 10 gulden, and the portraits they bear are those of William the First, who abdicated in 1840, William the Second, William the Third (his son) who ascended the throne in 1849, and Wilhelmina, the reigning Queen. Each of these portraits appears on three stamps, thus making up the set of twelve. The series commemorates the hundredth anniversary of the return of the Orange Nassau dynasty to the throne of the Netherlands in 1813.

Greek stamp with zigzag rouletting.

From HUNGARY we have had a full range of the current stamps supplied with an additional label or "tag" at the foot, *à la* the "Sunday" label of the Belgian stamps—but with a different object. During last summer there were very disastrous floods in various districts of Hungary; a fund was opened for the relief of the sufferers, and it was to aid this fund that the special "charity tag" was appended to the stamps. Various extra payments from 2 filler (about a fifth of a penny) upwards had to be made for each stamp purchased, according to value, and the extra amounts so collected were devoted to the relief fund.

HONDURAS is having new portrait stamps, very crudely designed and coarsely lithographed. So far only the low values, 1c. to 6c., have appeared. Another country to launch an entire new issue is JAPAN. There are eleven values, ½ sen to 1 yen; the designs are pretty much in the usual Japanese style, with the national chrysanthemum, of course, strongly in evidence.

LIBERIA.—Here is a very odd provisional stamp from the negro republic of Liberia. The 3 cents "Inland Postage" stamp of 1897 has had its numeral of value obliterated by means of a solid black star, and the new numeral of value "8" introduced at either side. At the same time the word "Inland" of "Inland Postage" is barred out to make the stamp available for either inland or oversea mail.

The 8c. on 3c. of Liberia.

The PORTUGUESE COLONIES have been beating all previous records in the multiplicity and diversity of their "Republica" overprints. Angola, Guinea, Macao, Mozambique, St. Thomas and Prince, and Portuguese India have been prominent in the lists of late, and all sorts of issues, including the unused stocks of the "Vasco de Gama" commemorative stamps, have been overprinted "Republica" and surcharged with new values to meet alleged postal requirements. Lest the collectors of Portuguese colonials should not find sufficient employment for their time (and money) the authorities are creating additional stamp-issuing districts, such as Querimale, Tete, etc., and by way of introducing a spice of novelty, they are dividing certain of the Dom Carlos stamps into two portions, by perforating them down the centre, and surcharging each half with a new value! Pity the poor specialist of Portugal and Colonies!

A sample of the Portuguese Colonial surcharges.

ROUMANIA has made a return to her old habit of issuing special stamps for special occasions by bringing out a pictorial series commemorating the annexation of Silistria during the recent trouble in the Balkans. There are ten of these things, with values from 1 ban to 2 lei, the designs being views and other pictorial subjects.

SWITZERLAND.—Here there is a charity stamp to chronicle, and as it was available for postage, philatelists, unfortunately, cannot ignore it. Issued in December, 1913, the stamp was available for postage from that date until February 28th, 1914. Although sold for 10 centimes the stamp was good for only 5 centimes' worth of postage, the difference going to the Swiss national fund for the prevention of tuberculosis.

A Swiss charity stamp.

TURKEY has taken a hand in the issuing of Balkan War stamps, by means of a set of Adrianople commemoratives, which were only in issue for a limited period. Since then we have had the gorgeous new set of Turkish stamps, the inclusion in which of a portrait of the reigning Sultan Mohammed has made all Europe sit up and stare. Seventeen stamps, ranging in face value from 2 paras to 200 piastres, go to the making up of this remarkable new series. There is a distinct design for each denomination, the subjects including various of the most famous mosques and other buildings of Constantinople. The highest value of all, the 200 piastres, bearing the full-face portrait of the Sultan Mohammed, may have been withdrawn from issue ere this number of THE CAPTAIN reaches its readers.

From ZANZIBAR we have had a beautiful new series of stamps, consisting of fifteen values, 1 cent to 200 rupees. The stamps from 1 cent to 75 cents show a portrait of the reigning Sultan, Khalifa ben Harub, while the 1 to 5 rupees have a view of a native boat, and the still higher values, 10 to 200 rupees, show an Arab dhow. I have heard the opinion expressed that these are the handsomest of the season's new issues.

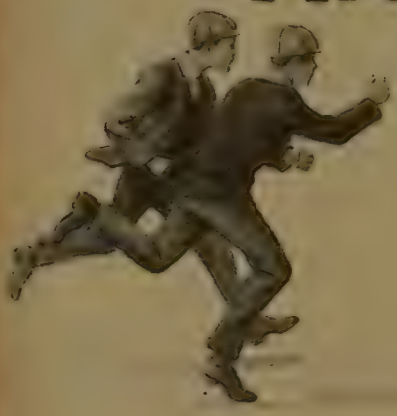
BRITISH STAMPS USED ABROAD

From time to time the stamp-collecting readers of THE CAPTAIN are puzzled regarding letters and post-cards coming from foreign countries, but yet bearing British postage stamps. Nowadays the great majority of these would be ship letters, but in some instances it is possible for mail matter bearing only British stamps to pass from foreign countries to addresses in the United Kingdom without the irregular stamping being noticed by the postal officials. In the same way it often happens that letters are posted from place to place in our own country bearing British colonial stamps without any excess postage being charged. I once posted a letter from one address in London to another to which there was attached simply a 25 centimes French stamp of the "Peace and Commerce" issue, and this was duly delivered without surcharge. However, I do not advise experiments of this kind as postal officials are not *always* too busy to use their eyes!

The "British stamps used abroad" that are of most interest (and value) to philatelists are those that were used in certain colonies and foreign countries before the introduction of postage stamps in those places. These specimens are only to be detected by their cancellations, special postmarks of the old numbered style having been allocated to particular post offices oversea.

Some of the best-known of these marks are those for Gibraltar ("A 26" or "G"), Malta ("A 25" or "M"), Constantinople ("C"), Cyprus ("D 47" and "D 48"), Buenos Aires ("B 32"), and Montevideo ("C 28"); but there are many others associated with places in the Near East and Far East, the West Indies, and North and South America. The collecting of "British stamps used abroad" has grown tremendously in favour during the past ten years, and the stamps are growing steadily scarcer as time goes on.

A CLOSE FINISH



By HAROLD AVERY

Illustrated by Colin Lockwood

I

"SUN'S jolly hot," remarked Clifford. "Almost too warm for the sports if it's like this to-morrow."

"Yes," answered Stack. "You'd hardly think it possible that, when we came back at the beginning of the term, there was half a foot of snow on the ground."

The two prefects were strolling across a space, known at Redgebury College as the "Gravel," which lay immediately in rear of the main block of buildings. The expanse was flooded with brilliant sunshine, the warmth of which was sufficient to tempt a belief that summer had already begun. Football was already a thing of the past, and athletic interests now centred in the sports, which were to be held on the morrow.

"I should like to know——" began Stack, but got no further owing to a sudden interruption from his companion.

"Look at that!" ejaculated Clifford, below his breath. "Now we've got him!"

Thirty yards away was the main entrance to the Big School; three stone steps giving access to a large porch, the interior of which, owing to the glare of the sun, appeared in deep shadow. In spite of the gloom, however, Clifford's sharp eye had detected the figure of a boy standing with arm upraised in front of the big notice-board. What there was in this to cause excitement a stranger might have deemed it difficult to explain; as it was, no sooner had Stack noticed the direction in which his chum was looking than, as if by mutual consent, the pair sprinted off at top speed across the gravel. Hardly had they started to run, however, when the clatter of feet was evidently heard by the boy in the porch; for a moment he seemed to hesitate, then quickly disappeared into the interior of the Big School.

"Come on!" gasped Clifford. "We'll have him yet. Did you see who it was?"

"No," was the reply. "He was standing in too deep a shadow."

Half an hour had passed since the general assembly at the close of the morning's work, and the stamp of their boots on the bare boards, as Clifford and Stack charged into the deserted Big School, echoed amongst the rafters of its lofty roof. The momentary glimpse of a flying form, as it vanished through a doorway on the opposite side of the room, quickened the pursuit. On dashed the prefects; a moment later they thundered down a short flight of stairs, and had hardly reached the bottom when a door at the end of an empty passage closed with a bang. Clifford was leading; he seized the door handle, gave it a twist, then drove his shoulder against the nearest panel.

"Just open this!" he cried, angrily. "You can't escape!"

"The key's here on the outside of the lock," muttered Stack. "He's dragged a desk or something across to serve as a barricade."

"Open the door!" bawled Clifford. "D'you hear what I say?"

For a few seconds the two prefects stood recovering their breath, and awaiting an answer to their summons.

During the past fortnight some person unknown, and seemingly of limited intelligence, had found amusement in making sundry pencilled additions to the matter of papers pinned on the big notice-board. The joke was of too feeble and paltry a kind to have attracted much attention, had not Mr. Lengton, the Head, at length discovered that, above an announcement made in his own handwriting, there appeared a line of roughly printed lettering—

"OH YES! OH YES! OH YES!"

The liberty thus taken with the notice struck Mr. Lengton as being both senseless and ill-bred. On certain questions of behaviour he was extremely punctilious, and the addition made to the notice he had caused to be pinned to the board angered him considerably. Finding that a similar thing had been done more than once before, he addressed the assembled school in a manner which left no doubt as to his intentions should the offence be repeated. "No one has any right to meddle with papers fastened to the notice-board," he concluded. "In future, any boy reported to me as guilty of such gross impertinence will be severely punished."

"Come on!" exclaimed Clifford. "We'll get him out of this."

The two seniors were "hefty" men, both of them members of the football eleven, and a determined application of their shoulders caused the door to give inwards a few inches. "Again!" panted Clifford, and a few moments later the aperture had become wide enough for him to force himself through edgeways, and scramble over a desk which had been dragged a couple of feet out of its usual position to form the barricade. He descended on the floor of a small class-room, not large enough for the accommodation of the average Form, but used for instruction in certain subjects given to a limited number of boys. It contained half a dozen of the usual combination of bench and sloping desk, four of which were ranged against the walls, the only other articles of furniture being a master's chair and table, a waste-paper basket, and a black-board which rested on the mantelpiece. Not a soul was to be seen.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Clifford, then added hastily, "By Jove! he's hooked it through the window!"

The class-room was on the ground floor; and, determined not to be balked of his prey, Clifford dashed to the open window, scrambled through, and dropped out into a small yard, at the opposite end of which was a narrow passage which formed the only means of exit. At the entrance to it stood a boy belonging to the Upper Fourth, whose attention was apparently occupied with putting a new lace into a spiked running-shoe.

Clifford rushed across the enclosure, and paused for an instant to make an inquiry.

"I say, Modler, who was it came past here a moment ago?"

"No one," was the answer given in a tone of mild surprise.

"Rot! How long have you been standing here?" demanded the prefect impatiently.

"Oh, I dunno—two or three minutes."

"Then you must have seen him. Some ass has been humbugging with the notice-board again. Stack and I chased him into what's called Parry's class-room; he managed to lug a desk across the door, and got out through the window. He must have passed you. It happened only a moment ago."

"You can say what you like, no one's been along this passage while I've been here," answered Modler, casually.

Stack, who had hesitated a few moments before following his friend's lead, now came jogging across the yard. "Who was it?" he inquired briefly as he came to a halt.

"Look here," began Clifford, angrily, "this fellows admits he's been standing here for several minutes, yet he declares that no one has been along this passage."

Stack cast a hasty glance round the enclosure.

"Wait a jiff," he said, quickly. "I expect he's gone to ground in the cycle shed. I'll have a look."

The structure in question was a lean-to erection with a corrugated roof. It was the only possible place in which a fugitive, escaping from the class-room, could have found shelter; yet, when Stack returned, a shake of his head signified that he had drawn blank.

"Then he must have bolted out this way," began Clifford. "I know what it is, Modler, you think it isn't your business to give the chap away, but he'll get the whole school into a row with his foolery, and deserves to be exposed. Now then, we mean to get it out of you—who was it?"

"It's quite true—what I've just told you. No one has been along this passage since I've been here."

Stack turned, and once more stared around as if half expecting to see the fugitive perched

aloft on some upper storey window-sill, or clinging like a fly to one of the neighbouring walls.

"*Must* have bunked out this way," he said at length. "You know who it was right enough, young 'un. Oh—well, if you won't speak we'll take you to Ormsdale."

The head of the school was eventually found in his study, in conversation with another member of the Upper Sixth named Kell. In a few words Clifford explained what had happened.

"I had a look at the notice-board as we came along," he concluded, "to see what he'd been doing. It's on the sports programme; after the words 'Mr. Haynes—starter,' there's put in brackets '(With his pocket cannon).'"

Kell grinned. On previous sports days it had been made evident that Mr. Haynes was the owner of a murderous-looking revolver, though to what use he ever expected to put it beyond giving the signal for the commencement of a race could never be imagined. The weapon had been made the subject of humorous comment.

"I suppose you can't recognise the handwriting?" inquired Ormsdale.

"No, it's capitals. Done with a pencil."

"Just a moment," interposed Kell. "It doesn't seem to have struck you two that it might have been Modler himself you were chasing. What I mean is, when he got as far as the passage, he may have stopped and tried to bluff you into believing that he'd been there some time."

An expression of doubt on the faces of the listeners showed that they were not inclined to accept this surprising suggestion as likely to prove the true explanation of the mystery. Modler was regarded as a good sportsman, a coming man in games. It seemed incredible that he should play the fool by scribbling nonsense on the notice-board.

"Was it you?" inquired the senior prefect, bluntly, after a moment's pause.

"No, of course it wasn't."

"But you know who they were after; you could tell us if you chose, eh?"

The prisoner fidgeted, shifting the balance of his body from one foot to the other.

"Now listen to me," began Ormsdale. "There's no fun in scribbling rot on things that are put up on the board. It's beastly cheek, and must be put a stop to. If Lengton hears it's been done again there'll be a row. Clifford declares he saw the fool at work, and chased him into the class-room; there was no one in the room a few moments later when the door was forced, but the window was open, showing how he'd got out, and you were at the entrance to the passage at the end of the yard. Either it was you yourself Clifford and Stack were after, or you must have seen him run past."

Modler maintained a dogged silence; it was evident that he was determined not to make any fresh admission.

Ormsdale leant back in his chair frowning. His idea was to summon the offender before a prefects' meeting rather than bring the matter to the notice of the Head. It would be a nuisance to have a row in which the whole college might be involved when, figuratively speaking, the line was clear for the sports.

"It's some pal of yours, Modler, I suppose, and you're trying to shield him. It won't wash. You'd better hunt him up, and tell him this—that I'll give the pair of you till tea-time to-morrow evening. If his name isn't given in by then, and you still refuse to speak, I shall take you to Lengton. You can't expect me to pass it over. There's been row enough kicked up over that stupid game, and it's time it was ended. See?"

"Yes."

"Then you know what you've got to do."

"I can understand the young beggar trying to keep his mouth shut rather than give someone else away," said Stack, as the study door closed on Modler's retreating form. "What I don't like is the way he sticks to it that no one passed him going out of the yard. That's a downright lie, nailed to the counter, yet he keeps on repeating it. Hitherto I shouldn't have expected that sort of thing from Modler."

II

THE released prisoner walked off with a thoughtful frown on his face, and in doubt as to how he meant to act. He was still carrying his running-shoe, and, deciding to put it in his locker, he made his way to the Upper Fourth class-room. A boy, lingering about in the otherwise deserted corridor, turned at the sound of approaching footsteps.

"Hullo, 'Model'! I say, what have those fellows been on to you about?"

For a moment Modler made no reply; he found it a little difficult to start a conversation with a person with whom he had once been on terms of closest friendship, but to whom he had not spoken a word for ten weeks.

"Look here, Waldron," he blurted out. "I

saw you open that window, so I suppose you are the fellow Clifford and Stack were after."

"Right first time," answered the other, with a grin. "What did they say to you about it? Didn't they know who it was?"

"No; they say they chased some chap into the class-room, that he barricaded the door, and when they burst it open he was gone. How on earth did you get away?"

Waldron chuckled, as if rather enjoying the memory of his own cuteness.

"The last place you expect to find an escaped prisoner is in the prison itself," he said. "I knew I couldn't keep them out of the room for long, and that they were bound to run me down in the end if I bolted, so I just opened the window, and lay down flat on one of the forms close against the wall. You can't see a fellow when he's like that unless you come up close and look over the desk. They never stopped to search; and, as soon as Stack was through the window, I slipped back the way I'd come. I suppose they thought I'd hooked it across the yard and down the passage?"

In a few brief sentences Modler described his interview with the two prefects, and his subsequent appearance before Ormsdale. Waldron's face grew serious.

"Hang it all!" he muttered. "I never thought they'd do that."

"What an ass you are to go scribbling rot on the notice-board."

"I didn't!" exclaimed Waldron with sudden earnestness. "I'm not such a silly idiot as to do that sort of thing, though I'll admit I've made an awful fool of myself. Look here, Model, I swear that every word I'm telling you is the truth. I went into the Big School porch to have a look at the sports notice, and I saw at once that some blighter had written 'With his pocket cannon' after the line which says that Mr. Haynes is starter. I thought it might prevent a row if I rubbed the words out. I'd got a pencil in my pocket with a bit of india-rubber at the end; just when I got my hand raised to the board I heard someone running, and saw those two pre's making a dash for the porch. I can't explain it, but I was sort of panic-stricken. It flashed through my mind they'd take it that I'd written that rot; they'd have bagged me with a pencil in my hand, and it's not so long ago I had a row with Haynes, and he kept me in every day for a week doing a beastly imposition. They'd have said I was trying to get back at him by poking fun at his silly old revolver. Anyway, I ran; and almost immediately I realised I'd cut my own throat. If they caught me they weren't likely to listen to any excuses. They'd say if I hadn't been guilty I shouldn't have bolted."

"It's about the notice board," stammered Waldron. "I've come to say it wasn't my doing."

Modler nodded; he was astonished and perplexed at Waldron's position. How the latter expected to clear himself was difficult to imagine.

"I suppose I'd better go to them now, and take my chance as to whether they'll believe me or not. I say, Model, if you knew who it was they were after, why didn't you tell 'em rather than stand being pitched into like that?"

"They said you'd been fooling with the notice-board, and I thought, if it came roun-

to the Head, after what he's said,-there'd be a beastly row. It struck me Lengton might prevent your taking part in the sports to-morrow—there's no telling, he might."

"Quite possible," admitted Waldron, gloomily. "Still, it was jolly decent of you not to give me away."

"Oh, it wasn't that exactly," replied Modler, as if anxious to waive aside the suggestion that his actions had been prompted by a purely chivalrous motive. "I thought fellows might say I'd done it on purpose."

"Why—because we had a row?"

"No. Well—er—you see, they might say it was lucky for me I'd got you kicked out of the sports because of the junior half-mile."

A light seemed to dawn on Waldron's understanding, and for a moment he stood staring at his companion without speaking.

"What a chap you are!" he murmured. "I should never have thought of that."

"Well, I did, and that's why I kept my mouth shut."

There was a good deal of interest displayed among the members of the Upper Fourth as to who would carry off the cup for the junior half-mile; Waldron and Modler were considered to have even chances. It was regarded as a toss up between them, and supporters of the two favourites, after wasting a good deal of breath discussing the matter, were looking forward to the moment when the contest would be finally decided.

"'Pon my word I must say you're more of a sportsman than I thought you were, Model, old chap. However, there's no help for it. I'd better go off to Ormsdale straight away and face the music."

"Wait till to-morrow evening. He said he'd give us till then. My belief is he himself doesn't want any bother over this notice-board affair till after the sports are over."

For a few moments Waldron stood lost in thought.

"If I do run to-morrow I shall run for all I'm worth," he said, suddenly. "I shall lick you, my sonny."

Modler grinned, but made no answer. He seemed content to await the judge's decision.

"I wish to goodness I'd kept away from that notice-board," sighed Waldron. "How can you expect those fellows to believe my explanation? The stuff was printed—anyone might have done it—so it's no use showing them a specimen of my handwriting."

"Your only chance would be to collar hold of the chap who really did do it."

"Yes, but how? It's no use keeping watch on the board, as he's sure not to go near it again between now and to-morrow evening."

"Can't set a trap for him, I suppose?"

"I tell you he won't do it again—not for a time, at any rate. What's more, you may depend it's some mean young beast; no decent fellow would do such a rotten thing. I bet you he'll lie low and keep his mouth shut, whatever happens."

Modler merely grunted. The situation seemed to him practically hopeless. He felt sorry for Waldron; all thought of their estrangement seemed to have passed out of his mind.

III

It was not for some seconds after the race was over that Modler at last became fully aware of the fact that he had won the junior half-mile. The last hundred yards had been like the climax of a nightmare. An opening between two dark blocks of motionless figures showed where the tape was stretched across the course, but, as he struggled towards it, he was all the time vaguely conscious of the close proximity of Waldron's green and white shirt, now close in front, now just behind, now drawing up level again. The air full of a roar of voices, increasing in a wild crescendo, and ending with a final yell; then came a collapse full length on the turf.

"Good man!" gasped Waldron, as soon as he had breath enough to speak. "Good old Model!"

The prize-giving, and the decision of a few minor events, were held over to the following day. The winner of the junior half-mile had every reason to feel pleased with himself, as the cup was not the only prize he had secured, and it gave him no little satisfaction to find himself on friendly terms once more with Waldron; yet, as he entered his dormitory to change, Modler felt depressed. Since dinner on the previous day he had had plenty of time for reflection, and the more he pondered over the notice-board incident the more complicated the situation seemed to become. Waldron had managed to get himself into a nice mess, and it was hard to imagine that any belief would be given to his excuses. What was more, it appeared quite possible that he, Modler, might be regarded as in some way a party to the crime. It was known that he had formerly been on intimate terms with Waldron, and it was not likely that great men in the Upper Sixth would have noticed the recent

estrangement. If Waldron was pronounced guilty, it might be said that Modler must have known all along who had meddled with the notice-board. A report of that kind would do much to tarnish hard-won distinction in the playing-field.

"If I'd only known," groaned Modler, "I wouldn't have stood about at the entrance to that passage, then I should never have been mixed up in this wretched business."

Ten minutes later, in a quiet corner of one of the ground floor corridors, he encountered the cause of his troubles.

"I'm trying to think what I shall say," began Waldron with a look of profound dejection. "I suppose it don't matter much, as they are sure not to believe it."

"You'll have to say something," replied Modler. "The truth's about as good as anything, as far as I can see. The tea-bell will ring in a few minutes, so you'd better do it now. Go to Ormsdale, and I'll come too."

"I wish it had been any other master than Haynes," muttered Waldron. "It's known he's been down on me lately, and that silly jest will seem all the more like my doing. What a crank Haynes is! Fancy his giving us dictation this morning, and two verses of poetry! I suppose he'll be setting us to write out the multiplication table next."

"Oh, come on!" exclaimed Modler, impatiently. "Let's say what we've got to say, and have done with it."

The senior prefect looked rather surprised when, in answer to a muffled roar of "Come in!" which followed their knock, the two boys entered his study.

"Well, what d'you want?" he inquired.

"It's about the notice-board," stammered Waldron. "I've come to say it wasn't my doing."

"Who said it *was?*"

Waldron seemed taken aback by this blunt inquiry. He stared at the speaker in mute astonishment.

"I don't want every fellow in the place to come barging in here simply to tell me he hasn't done what he didn't," said Ormsdale, petulantly, then, catching sight of Modler, he seemed to remember something. "Oh, I see now," he continued. "It's about that affair with Stack and Clifford."

"It was my fault, and Modler had nothing to do with it," began Waldron, and launched out into a hurried account of what had occurred. "I know I was a fool to rush off like that when I saw Clifford coming," he said in conclusion. "But you see how it was; I made sure they'd think it was I who had scribbled that rot on the sports notice, and I swear I didn't."

"Needn't swear, I quite believe you," said Ormsdale with a perfectly grave face. "What you'd better do is go and apologise to Stack and Clifford. When a pre. orders you to open a door you've no business to drag a form across it. Tell 'em what you've told me, and I expect they'll let you off."

Waldron stood for a moment overwhelmed with astonishment at the ease with which he had established his innocence. What a brick Ormsdale was to take a fellow's word in that unhesitating manner.

"I've never scribbled anything on the notice-board. I should——"

"I know—I know," interrupted the senior prefect. "Now hook it."

In a state of utter bewilderment Modler and his companion moved towards the door, but as they were on the point of leaving the study Ormsdale called them back.

"I suppose I may as well tell you I know who it was wrote that on the sports notice."

"Has he owned up?" gasped Waldron.

"Not voluntarily, if that's what you mean. I spoke to some of the masters last night, and the result was that all you fellows from the Fourth downwards were given a piece of dictation to write in morning school—some verses from the 'Charge of the Light Brigade,' 'Cannon to the right of them, cannon to the left of them,' and so on. It so happened that only one kid made the mistake we were looking out for; he spelt it 'canon,' and he'd done the same thing on the sports notice, though, as the letters were printed, there was no chance of recognising the handwriting. We've just tackled him about it—that young beast Mitchling—got him on the ground hop, and made him own up he'd been doing it all along. I think he's a bit dotty; anyway, that appears to have been his idea of a lark. By the way, you two ran that half-mile jolly well—about the closest thing I've ever seen."

Outside in the passage Waldron whirled his companion round, trod on his toe, and bumped him violently against the wall.

"I say, Model, old sport, I'm jolly glad that chap has been collared. I feel I *must* do something. Let's have a fight!"

"Oh, shut up," returned Modler with a grin, at the same time rubbing his shoulder. "I've licked you once to-day, so if I were you I shouldn't go asking for more. It sounds a bit greedy."

COMPETITIONS FOR APRIL

Interesting Contests for Captainites

No. 1.—Photographs of School Sports

This competition is for amateur photographers only. Photographs entered may depict any event in your school sports this year. Your name, address, and age, together with particulars of the event, including the name of the school, must be written *on the back of the print.* The make of camera used should also be stated. The closing date for this competition is May 15th but entries should be posted as soon as possible. We reserve the right to publish any photograph submitted.

FIRST PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: Goods to the value of One Guinea.

SECOND PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Book by a CAPTAIN author.

No. 2.—Cycle v. Motor-Cycle: Five Reasons in Favour of Either

Which do you think possesses most advantages, a pedal cycle or a motor-cycle? When you have come to your decision, state which of the two types of machine you favour, and give *five reasons for your choice.* Write your five reasons beneath each other and number them.

FIRST PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Dynalite Electric Lamp, price 23*s.* 6*d.*, from the Economic Electric Co.

SECOND PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Book by a CAPTAIN author.

No. 3.—Drawing—A Turret

Send a drawing, in pencil, ink, or colours, of a turret or belfry.

FIRST PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: Goods to the value of Half a Guinea.

SECOND PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Book by a CAPTAIN author.

Rules and Conditions

1. The name, address, and age of the competitor must be written above his attempt.

2. Each attempt must be accompanied by the proper coupon to be found on the prizes page (see page vi.).

3. Competitors will be divided into two classes, as follows:—

Class I.—Competitors sixteen years of age and over.

Class II.—Competitors under sixteen.

4. Entries for competitions Nos. 2 and 3 must be received not later than Monday, April 20th, 1914, addressed to the Competition Editor, THE CAPTAIN, 8, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. Entries for competition No. 1 must be received not later than May 15th, but should be posted as long before that date as possible.

5. The number of the competition must be written in the top left-hand corner of the envelope in which an attempt is posted.

6. The Editor's decision must be accepted as final.

CONSOLATION PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED IN EACH COMPETITION

RESULTS OF FEBRUARY COMPETITION

Title Sentence

CLASS I.—WINNER OF FIRST PRIZE (Goods to the value of Half a Guinea): REG. C. POWNEY 6, Auckland Road, Cambridge.

CLASS II.—WINNER OF FIRST PRIZE (Goods to the value of Half a Guinea): DONALD H. WAIN, 17, North Parade, Derby.

CONSOLATION PRIZES: F. R. G. Spikins, Kingston Hill; Cadet P. C. Polwhele, R.N., Osborne; B. B. Thompson, Shrewsbury; E. J. Gaskill, Streatham; Wallace Wigzell, Camberwell; P. M. Plucknett, Liphook; C. C. Brockington, Taunton; Cadet R. Walker, R.N., Dartmouth; William Franter, Manchester; Robert Garr, Crieff.

Short Review

CLASS I.—WINNER OF FIRST PRIZE (Goods to the value of Half a Guinea): CHARLES REED, "Twitton," Khartoum Road, Highfield, Southampton.

CLASS II.—WINNER OF FIRST PRIZE (Goods to the value of Half a Guinea): JAMES E. BIRCHAM, 3, Ormonde Road, Chester.

CONSOLATION PRIZES: Vincent H. Roberts, Northop; T. F. Handel, Upper Tooting; Fred J. Chapple, junior, Manchester; M. J. Atkins, Wimborne; F. J. Hardwick, Northampton; W. R. Allen, Birkenhead; H. L. Addis, Westminster; Harry Wightman, Dunfermline; F. Perez, Regent's Park; Willmar Cardell, Newquay.

SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, LONDON

I have much pleasure in informing rowing readers that the Committee of Molesey Regatta have again kindly consented to put the Captain Cup race on their programme. The regatta, which ranks next in importance to Henley, will be held on Saturday, July 18th, and I hope to have the generous support of rowing schools for our race.

In the four years that the Public Schools Rowing Challenge Cup (presented by THE CAPTAIN) has been in existence, we have attracted a fairly satisfactory number of entries—Imperial Service College, Beaumont College, Westminster, King's School, Worcester, Tiffin's School, and Kingston Grammar School have all figured in the race. Last year there was a falling off in entries, for, though several schools expressed a desire to compete, only two crews actually started. It had been suggested that the opinion of rowing schools should be taken as to the advisability of making the event a fixed-seat instead of a sliding-seat race. During the winter, however, the Marlow Regatta Committee, being well satisfied with their experiment of holding their regatta in June, decided that this year they would restore to their programme the old race for the Public Schools Challenge Cup, which from 1879 to 1884 was associated with Henley, and was afterwards rowed for at Marlow, from 1885 to 1891.

The Two Cups.—This is a fixed-seat, four-oared race, and it has therefore been decided to retain our challenge cup event as a sliding-seat race. As Marlow Regatta is arranged for June 20th, and Molesey for July 18th, there should be ample opportunity for crews competing in the fixed-seat race to get ready for the Molesey event, on slides. The races should in future help one another, and it may be hoped that it will become the fashion among rowing schools to start their open competition at Marlow, and make our Cup race at Molesey their next step up the ladder of aquatic fame which leads to competition at Henley.

That there is plenty of enthusiasm among rowing schools is proved by the capital entries at Henley last year. I sincerely ask that some of that enthusiasm may be extended to the support of other Thames regattas at which an effort is made to encourage public school rowing, and I can assure all schools of a particularly hearty welcome to Molesey.

To Rowing Secretaries.—I shall be publishing shortly an up-to-date article on Public School Rowing, and shall be glad to receive from club officials short summaries of the performances of 1913, and notes on the prospects of 1914, together with appropriate illustrations, for inclusion in the article. Meanwhile, I would ask readers to keep the Molesey date, Saturday, July 18th, well in mind, and to do all in their power to assist in making this year's race the most successful in its history.

School Sports Results.—For several years past we have published in a clear and concise way particulars of the results at public schools sports, and the feature has become extremely popular, since one is able to compare at a glance the performances achieved by winning competitors at the various schools.

The work of tabulating the results is long and arduous, and it is not the unlikeliest thing in the world that occasionally a school may be overlooked. I don't want this to happen if it can possibly be avoided, and you will ensure your school being included in the list if, on the completion of the sports, you send to these offices (addressed to "The School Sports Fag") the names of the winners, and particulars of their performances. We only require details of open events, and you would lighten our labours considerably if you gave them in this order: Long jump, high jump, 100yds., quarter-mile, half-mile, mile, and 120yds. hurdles. If there are any cases of records being broken (and we hope there will be) please let us know.

One of the most famous men who have ever drawn pictures for THE CAPTAIN is Mr. R. Caton Woodville, and though many of our contributors have been in peril of their lives in the most lonely and dangerous places of the world, his life has probably been the most adventurous of them all. Indeed, his career had scarcely commenced before it was within an ace of being summarily ended by execution at the hands of Albanians: but that little thrill did not deter Caton Woodville the least whit from subsequently placing himself wherever danger was thickest and adventures most assured. I have been reading his "Random Recollections," which Messrs. Eveleigh Nash have just published at half a guinea, and those fellows who would like to know the sort of stuff a first-class war artist must be made of ought to follow my example. Mr. Caton Woodville is as true an artist with the pen as he is with the brush; he has so much to tell, so much knowledge to impart, that there is absolutely no room in the capacious volume for anything approaching the uninteresting.

The latest portrait of H.R.H. Prince Henry, taken at Eton.

He is almost breathless in his haste to get from one reminiscence to another. Almost before he has concluded the narration of an exciting episode in India he is in the midst of another which has Egypt for its *mise-en-scène*, and wherever the foot of the soldier has trod in the Near or Far East there this artist-author has been and seen, so that his storehouse of knowledge is well-nigh limitless. Potentates of every land have welcomed him as an honoured guest, and many good stories he has to tell about his life when he was painting the portraits of Indian rulers. Caton Woodville had just finished a life-sized equestrian portrait of the Nizam of Hyderabad, for which he received an enormous sum, when another noble approached him and requested him to paint his portrait also. "I like your pictures," said this Nawab, "but not your price; you will, perhaps, for me paint one for less?" Mr. Woodville replied that it was impossible to make one price for the Nizam and another for the Nawab, and it would not be fair to his dignity. "All right," answered the Nawab. "I will think about it. Come and lunch with me to-morrow." At the lunch a magnificent repast was prepared; there were innumerable dishes and plenty of the very best brands of champagne. When the lunch came to an end, the Nawab turned to Caton Woodville, and said, "Now let us talk about the picture. You will paint it for me a little less—say half?" The artist replied that he could not alter his mind, and that the price must remain the same for him as for his highness. "Ah!" said the Nawab, with a deep sigh, "my heart desires it, but my pocket does not." Then, turning to his head man, he said, "No more champagne; put it all away." And, shaking hands with Caton Woodville, he wished him a curt good-bye.

A Commission from the Queen.—When Caton Woodville was in Cairo in the autumn of 1882 he was informed by Lord Dufferin, then British High Commissioner for the pacification of Egypt, that Queen Victoria commanded him to paint a picture of H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught and the Guards at Tel-el-Kebir. Two years later this picture was hung in the Royal Academy, and it proved to be the first of many commissions from the Royal family. For example, he has since painted portraits of both King Edward and King George, and it was while the former was giving the artist a sitting that Caton Woodville was able to give His Majesty some most valuable information concerning the preparations of the Boers for war. The King was greatly astonished at the particulars, and our War Office was immediately informed.

Caton Woodville is always extremely careful to be perfectly accurate in his details. As an instance of his accuracy in minor matters, the following story is well worth retelling. The Duke of Connaught had one of Caton Woodville's water-colours, representing a drummer in the Guards. Meeting the artist in Windsor Castle, the duke said: "Look here, Mr. Woodville, you have made a mistake in the mounting of the braiding on this drummer's coat; the fringe on the side of the chest ought to run in this direction," and he indicated the line. "I am certain of it, for as a boy I wore the uniform, but I will show you what I mean." The duke turned to his A.D.C., and asked to have the bugler of the Castle guard sent up. The bugler came, and the duke said, "Now, Mr. Woodville, I will show you what I mean." And then, as he looked critically at the boy's uniform, he exclaimed, "By Jove, Mr. Woodville, you are right after all!"

Several of Caton Woodville's finest pictures illustrate the "Random Recollections," and the painting, "General Bonaparte at St. Jean d'Acre," which appears on the first page of this number, is reproduced by special permission of the publishers. Mr. Caton Woodville's most engagingly written reminiscences will appeal to many Captainites, who have so often been delighted by his illustrations in this magazine, and many of whom number among their most cherished possessions the beautiful painting, "How Bobs Won the V.C.," which was the first coloured plate we ever gave away.

Answers to Correspondents

STAMPS

W. P. S. (Wigan).—There is no plate number indicated on the current British stamps. There is a control number appearing on the lower margin of the complete sheet of stamps, and the varieties of these control numbers are collected by specialists of British issues.

W. F. (Halifax).—For an elementary handbook try "Stamps for Beginners," by Armstrong & Dalwigk, post free 7*d.* from the Philatelic Press, 22, Chancery Lane, London, W.C. The best catalogue for your purpose would be the "Standard," post free 2*s.*, from Whitfield King & Co., Ipswich.

W. H. E. T. (Wellingborough).—The Kew-Kiang stamps are a Chinese local issue. The unused set you describe would be worth 1*s.* to 2*s.*, but there is a very limited market for them.

T. E. M. (Nottingham).—The very commonest duplicates are most difficult to sell. Nobody wants them. Try an exchange club.

R. de P. (Epsom).—I think Transvaal, as a speciality, will prove rather expensive, but as you have a good start by all means go on. It is a most interesting country; so are the others you name. By all means get newer catalogues than 1909; they will well repay their cost.

A. N. W.—The "Resellada" stamps of Venezuela were provisional issues of 1899-1900. The initials upon them, "R. T. M.," are those of Ramon Tellos Mendoza, the then Minister of the Interior.

Kremo.—I know of no market for used ½*d.* and 1*d.* British stamps of current issues.

G. L. G.—About 7*s.* to 10*s.*

N. L. J. P.—The stamps have not been reprinted to my knowledge. Join some philatelic society to get in touch with collectors abroad; or advertise.

K. G. C. (Aberdeen).—No value.

Ignorant. (Eton).—(1) The "Danbury, Conn.," on your U.S.A. stamp is not an overprint, but a postmark. It is what is called in America a pre-cancelled stamp. (2) No; worth face-value only.

C. B. H. (Clapham).—(1) The idea was that the values should be indicated by the colours. (2) Of no value if torn.

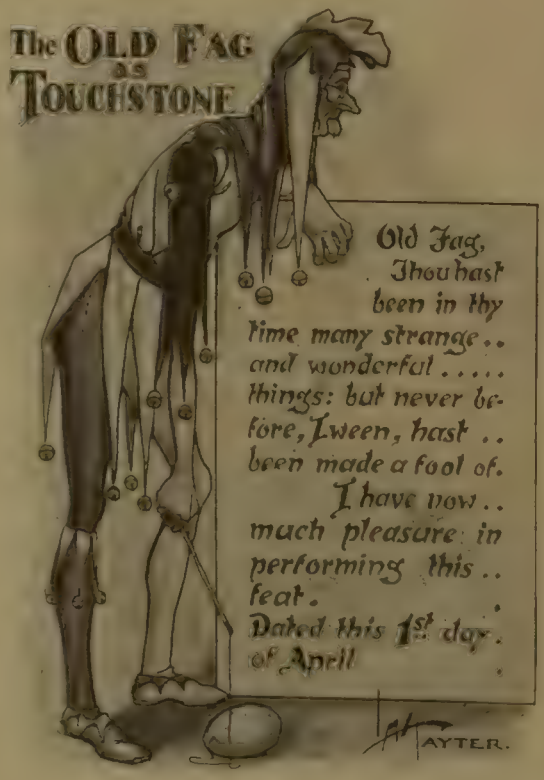
GENERAL

Captainitus Dubitatus (Malvern).—(1) A book that will probably serve your purpose is "Experimental Proofs of Chemical Theory for Beginners," by Sir William Ramsay, issued by Macmillan & Co. at 2*s.* 6*d.* Experiments are described in most text-books of chemistry, such as "Inorganic Chemistry," Part I., by Kipping and Perkin (W. & R. Chambers, 3*s.* 6*d.*). (2) The Club Captain tells me that there is no branch in Malvern at present. Why not try to form one yourself? (3) To operate the Morse code you want to get a "key" or "tapper," which can be purchased for a shilling or so and upwards from any dealer in electrical goods. See our advertisement pages for addresses.

Vincent H. C. Jarrett, a Singapore reader who has lived in that district all his life, writes me an interesting letter about our article on R. M. Ballantyne. After commenting on the famous

author's amusing mistake about the size of coconuts, my correspondent continues:—

"We are also told in the book that a natural 'cloth' grew around the base of the coconut-palm fronds, and that Jack and his companions were able to make a sail out of it. Though not incorrect, this statement is somewhat exaggerated, as the fibrous, cloth-like substance to be found on coconut trees occurs only in pieces about a foot square on an average, and is somewhat stiff and uneven in texture. In fact, a sail made of this 'cloth,' besides requiring great labour in the manufacture, would most probably let nearly all the breeze go right through it, the meshing being about fifteen to the inch. This recalls to my mind a passage in 'Martin Rattler' which I often puzzled over. As readers of the book will remember, mention is made of a milky fluid, exuding from certain trees which the hermit called his 'natural cows,' which Martin and the genial Irish sailor took with their coffee and found 'very much like rich cream.' It has now occurred to me that the trees in question may have been Para rubber trees (*Hevea Braziliensis*). These trees, at one time confined to Brazil, are now planted in countless numbers out here, and I can vouch for it that the milky latex, which exudes from incisions in the bark, is far from ideal as a food, if not actually harmful. Why, it would be almost equivalent to eating rubber! Could this have been another mistake of Ballantyne's? It is certainly strange that a tree which gives fine cream practically for the asking, if it exists, has not yet come before the public."



New Reader (Sault Ste. Marie).—An edition of "The Romance of War," by James Grant, is published by Messrs. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., Broadway House, Carter Lane, E.C., price 2*s*. You could order it direct from them at the cost of a few pence extra for postage. Many thanks for your appreciative remarks.

F. W. S. (Hull).—You want to be an artist like Brock and Whitwell? I wish you speedy success. But to inquire about prices is to begin at the wrong end. Draw some pictures like those of the artists you admire, and then see what you can get for them. I shall be glad to see any work you may like to show me.

A. V. H. (Dulwich).—Here are the titles of some recently published tales of the kind you name: "The Race Round the World," by Captain Charles Gilson (Henry Frowde, Hodder & Stoughton, 3*s*. 6*d*.); "The Great Antarctic," by John Mackie (Jerrold & Sons, 3*s*. 6*d*.); "The Stolen Cruiser," by Percy F. Westerman (Nisbet & Co., 3*s*. 6*d*.); "The Great Airship," by Captain Brereton (Blackie & Co., 5*s*.); "Ian Hardy, Naval Cadet," by Commander E. Hamilton Currey (Seeley, Service & Co., 5*s*.); "The Air Patrol," by Herbert Strang (Henry Frowde, Hodder & Stoughton, 6*s*.); "The Rival Submarines," by Percy F. Westerman (S. W. Partridge & Co., 6*s*.).

J. M. (Jarrow).—Sorry, but the puzzle you send does not strike me as either very novel or very interesting. Thanks for offering it, none the less. By the way, old fellow, you might note that a single penny stamp is far more likely to bring a reply by return of post than ever so many red-ink underlines.

E. C. Mitchell.—A child takes its nationality from its father, and in the case you cite the boy is German, though born in England, unless his father had taken out a certificate of naturalisation as a British subject.

A Reader (Wandsworth).—Rub the bat with linseed oil, or with one of the prepared oils to be obtained from most dealers in athletic goods.

Speedite asks: "Can one drive an electric locomotive (4 volt) from a 4-ampere hour accumulator? Could one also charge it with a hand-driven dynamo?" The average electric locomotive takes 1½ to 2 amperes, and you will find that at this discharging rate a 4-ampere cell will soon run down, probably in half an hour. Use a 20-ampere hour cell, at least. You could charge a 4-volt cell with a hand-driven dynamo, but in five minutes you would give it up.

James Shepley.—The materials you need can be obtained from Messrs. Jacobs & Co., 265, Borough High Street, London, S.E.

Acknowledgments and thanks are also due to **R. S. Ashley, H. Pratt, "Friend," T. S.** (Winchester), **James Burt, Alan Read, G. E. D.** (Dover), and **"Appreciator."**

THE OLD FAG

A FEW WAYS OF GOING TO THE WICKET
THE HAUGHTY
THE DO OR DIE
THE OPTIMISTIC
THE THOUGHTFUL
THE "FEARFULLY KEEN"
THE NERVY

The flame glinted for a moment upon an evil face peering down at them from over the shutter. It was visible only for an instant, but the three recognised with amazement the features of the man called Wen Shih.

The

Old Man of the Mountain

A Story of Mystery and Adventure in Tibet

By HERBERT STRANG

Illustrated by RENÉ BULL

Synopsis of Opening Instalment

THREE young tea-planters in Assam—Bob Jackson, Dick Forrester, and Alan Mackenzie—are camping one night after a tiger hunt, when from the jungle an Englishman staggers towards them in a delirious fever. From his rambling words and from information gained subsequently they learn that he is a Captain Redfern, who had set out to explore the buried cities in Chinese Turkestan with an archæologist named Beresford, and they gather that he has escaped from some great peril, leaving his companion a prisoner in unknown hands. A rough plan is the only guide they find to the whereabouts of Beresford, but they set out to rescue him, leaving Redfern, still unconscious, in the care of a neighbouring planter. As they start two Chinamen ask to accompany them as far as their ways lie together. The younger seems to be under some mysterious spell exercised by the other (a one-armed man named Wen Shih), for whom he acts as interpreter, and once, when alone with Forrester, he declares that he is a mandarin's son in the power of Wen Shih, and implores the Englishman to rescue him.

Mackenzie is frankly suspicious of the Chinamen, and keeps them well in sight; yet, as they stop to camp on the second night, the Chinamen, whom they had believed to be among the native carriers, are not to be seen.

CHAPTER V

THE EYE

FORRESTER was the first to break the silence.

"They've gone a little out of the way," he suggested. "By the time we've got the tent up, they'll be here."

But minutes passed, and the men did not appear.

"We had better go and look for them," said Jackson.

"It's a good riddance," Mackenzie replied.

"But we can't leave them in the lurch," said Forrester. "They've absolutely no defence against wild beasts. Come along! We three will go with Sher Jang back into the scrub and beat it. We mustn't lose touch with each other. Every man give a cooee every few seconds."

The suggestion was carried out. The four men scattered, and worked back through the scrub until daylight was almost gone. No trace of the Chinamen could be discovered. Forrester called to his companions to join him.

"It's my belief they've done a bolt," he said. "They couldn't possibly have missed the track. But where can they have gone? Tibet is still very far off, and they run no end of risks going through the country unarmed."

"D'you think they've got friends in this neighbourhood?" Jackson asked.

"Eh, what use is it talking?" Mackenzie replied. "They're gone, and for my part I don't wish to see them again."

"All the same, it's queer their going away suddenly without their carriers, and not saying a word," Forrester remarked. "They were polite enough in asking to be allowed to join us."

"Ay, there's something mysterious about them; we must be on our guard," said Mackenzie. "It's not very likely they're in league with the natives of these parts, but you never can tell."

"I'd give something to learn the history of

that one-armed fellow," said Jackson, reflectively.

Next day, on emerging from the tract of scrub, the party found themselves on a bare rocky ridge below which stretched a broad and densely wooded valley. On the farther side the ground rose steeply to the foothills of the snowy range. The hollows were clothed with vegetation, which formed dark green patches amid bare brown spaces of rock.

"Which way are we to go now?" Forrester said, as they halted on the ridge to survey the country.

"Camel's Hump and Monkey Face are clean out of sight," said Jackson, after a glance behind. "All we can do is to make straight for the north. The falls must be part of a river, and when we get a bit higher we may see it winding through the country. If it's of any size, we must work up its course until we find the falls."

"Ay, there's nothing else for it," said Mackenzie. "I'm beginning to think we've tackled a tough job."

"I've thought that for some time," said Forrester. "However, we'll go through with it. The first thing now is to cross this valley Lead the way, Sher Jang."

To descend the precipitous slope through entangling undergrowth that reminded them of bramble bushes in England was a long and arduous undertaking. The surface of the ground was so irregular that they dared not take a step without first probing the bushes for a foothold. Every few yards there was the risk of a sprained ankle or a broken neck. It was mid-day before they reached the bottom, and then the ascent on the farther side was even more toilsome, though less dangerous.

As the day drew on, the air became sultry and oppressive, portending a storm, and the party pushed on as rapidly as possible in order to fix their camp before the rain began. Late in the afternoon, Sher Jang suddenly halted in a clump of woodland, and pointed to some tree-stumps on which there were clear marks of axes.

"There are men hereabout, sahib," he said to Forrester.

"Thank goodness!" Mackenzie ejaculated. "Now, perhaps, we will find someone who'll tell us the road."

"Keep a look-out, though," said Jackson. "We don't want to tumble into a hornets' nest."

They advanced cautiously, noting as they proceeded more stumps, and at one spot a pile of newly felled logs. The trees grew thickly and to a considerable height, so that they marched in a dim twilight. Presently, almost without warning, they came to a wide open space, on the far side of which a number of small dark-skinned, half-naked people were gathered about cooking-pots. Behind them, a line of grass huts stood at the fringe of the woodland. Forrester called a halt at the edge of the clearing, intending to discover from his Naga carriers whether they could identify the people. But some slight sound must have been heard by the natives, for they suddenly sprang up; the women and children rushed into the huts, and the men seized their long bows and arrows, and stood facing the quarter from which they had heard the alarming sound.

Trusting in the appearance of a white man to allay their fears, Forrester stepped forward out of the gloom of the forest. His action had an effect exactly the contrary of what he intended. At the first sight of him the little men uttered a wild howl, and fled among the trees, followed by the women and children, who streamed out of their huts with screams of fright.

"They take you for a bogey-man, Dick," said Jackson. "Evidently they have never seen a white man before."

"What shall we do?" Forrester asked of Sher Jang.

The *shikari* suggested that the Nagas might be able to communicate with the natives, and reassure them. Accordingly the head carrier, dropping his burden, stepped forth into the clearing, and shouted "He-hoh! He-huh!" in a tone that might have been heard half a mile away. Some time elapsed before his shouts had any result; then a few of the men came slinking back, dodging from tree to tree with the utmost wariness.

The Naga spread his arms to show that he carried no weapon; then squatted in the middle of the clearing and began to talk in a musical sing-song, every now and then waving his hand in the direction of his employers What he said they did not know, nor did Sher Jang, though he could speak to him in his own tongue; but it was clear that he had managed to make himself understood by the villagers, for these came dropping back by twos and threes, until apparently the whole population was once more assembled.

Forrester sent the Naga to them with a number of slight gifts, and through him asked to be allowed to camp in the clearing for the

night. After some discussion among themselves, this permission was granted, provided the strangers would remain on the opposite side. Some of them plucked up courage to cross the clearing and watch the erection of the tent, and the o her movements of the white men; and, finding that they were not molested, they squatted in a ring on the ground, following every operation with a lively curiosity that found expression in monosyllabic cries and clicking noises in their throats.

When the white men had eaten their supper, they decided to profit by the friendliness of these peaceable villagers. To hold a palaver would be a difficult matter, since Sher Jang had to interpret Forrester to the Naga, and the Naga to translate to the village head-man. But the opportunity of gaining some clue to their destination was too good to be neglected. It was a strange scene in that forest glade, illuminated by the camp fires on opposite sides. The three white men sat in front of the tent, their followers ranging themselves on the wings. A few yards in front of them the chief men of the village crouched in a half-circle. Behind stood the rest of the community, young and old, gazing wide-eyed over the heads of the men. Everybody, white and brown, old and young, men and women, smoked a pipe. Sher Jang and the Naga stood between the white men and the villagers, the former imperturbable as ever, the latter assuming a comical air of importance, and turning now and again to his friends for admiration. The conversation took the form of question and answer.

"Do they know of a waterfall hereabouts?" Forrester asked.

"Yes," was the reply. "There is a little fall close at hand; but it is nothing to the fall yonder in the mountains, where the river pours from the clouds into the depths of the earth."

"Have they ever been there?"

"No, but they have seen it afar off."

"Do they know whether men live in its neighbourhood?"

At this question the little man hesitated, and spoke a few words to his companions. Then he admitted that there were men living near the waterfall.

"Why haven't they ever been there, then?" asked Forrester.

"They have never dared."

"Are the men enemies of theirs?"

This question again was not answered as promptly as the others. The reply came at last that the men were not exactly enemies, but there was the Eye.

"What does he mean? What is the Eye?" Forrester asked.

"What is the Eye?"

The Naga repeated the question. The villager hesitated. At this moment there was a slight rumble of thunder in the distance, and the man started backward, spreading his arms. A second and a louder rumble followed, and then a lightning flash. The man and his companions bent forward, till their heads touched the ground, covering their eyes with their hands. In tones of awe a few words fell from their lips.

"What do they say?" Forrester asked.

"That is the Eye, sahib," Sher Jang replied, after questioning the Naga.

Then the thunder pealed directly overhead, clap succeeding clap, and sheets of lightning moment by moment threw a blinding glare over the clearing.

The women fled screaming into their tents; the men cowered on the ground, and showed signs of abject terror, uttering piteous cries which the white men, though they did not understand the words, recognised as appeals for mercy. The little spokesman addressed a word or two to the Naga interpreter, then rushed back across the clearing with his friends. All disappeared into their dwellings.

"What did he say?" Forrester asked.

"'He speaks! He speaks!'"

"They take the thunder to be the voice of an angry god," Jackson suggested.

"Maybe," said Mackenzie, "but our Nagas aren't afraid, and they are akin to these people."

"It's because they have had dealings with white men, perhaps," said Forrester. "It's only the untutored savage who is likely to cherish such a superstition. Anyhow, it's clear that we shan't get anything more out of them to-night. We had better try again in the morning."

The tempest heralded by the thunder and lightning soon broke over the camp. Rain fell in floods, quenching the fires in a few seconds, and turning the hollow centre of the glade into a lake. The travellers, accustomed to the torrential rains of north-eastern India, had brought oil-skins and rubber sheeting; but even these did not avail to protect them thoroughly from the terrific downpour. Their native followers sought a partial shelter in the forest, where they remained until the violence of the storm abated. The Englishmen spent

an uncomfortable night on the sodden ground, and dosed themselves with quinine to ward off the malarial fever that so often ensues on exposure to the damp in tropical climes.

The morning broke fair and sunny, and a fierce cold wind blew down from the mountains. With the change of weather the villagers had regained their courage, and crowded about the travellers with the same curiosity as they had shown the evening before. Some of the men fraternised with the Naga carriers, exchanging food with them, and talking freely.

"I dare say we shall be able to persuade them to guide us to the fall," Forrester remarked, watching them as he sat at breakfast with his friends.

"But the man said they had never dared to go there because of the Eye, whatever that is," said Jackson.

"Well, they will at least put us in the right direction," said Forrester. "If they bring us within sight of it, that will be enough."

"What are they saying to our Nagas?" said Mackenzie. "Look at them!"

The faces of the carriers wore an expression of uneasiness, and they glanced at their employers with the sidelong stealth of men conscious of a fault.

"You had better ask about guiding us at once," said Jackson.

Forrester sent Sher Jang for the spokesman of the previous evening and the Naga who had interpreted. A bargain was soon struck. In return for a few trifling articles of the camp equipage, the villager agreed to guide the party in the direction of the waterfall. Part of the payment was handed over at once, and the customary preparations for marching were made. But, when Forrester gave the order to shoulder loads, to his astonishment the Nagas made no movement. They stood back with an air of sullen obstinacy, muttering under their breath.

"What does this mean?" Forrester asked Sher Jang.

"They say they will go no farther, sahib," the *shikari* replied.

"Nonsense! What's the matter with them?"

"They engaged for the job," Mackenzie added. "Tell them they'll lose their pay if they back out."

But the Nagas treated with equal indifference all that was said to them. When Sher Jang threatened them with the loss of their pay, one of them blurted out that they would carry the baggage back for nothing, rather than go farther northward.

"But why is it?" Forrester cried in exasperation. "What has upset them? What are they scared of?"

"They say the Eye, sahib," Sher Jang replied, after he had questioned the men.

"The Eye again!"

"That is what they were colloguing about just now, no doubt," said Mackenzie.

"Tell them it's all a pack of nonsense, Sher Jang," said Forrester. "There is no eye that can do them any harm, and our guns will protect them."

The Nagas' response to this was to shout to the villagers who stood looking on. Two of these ran across the clearing, and entered one of the huts.

"They say you shall see, sahib," Sher Jang explained.

"It is some ridiculous superstition, I suppose," said Forrester. "We shall have to squash it somehow, or we are dished."

In a few moments the villagers emerged from the hut, leading an old man whose long hair and beard betokened the neglect of all tendance. His right arm was missing, and his eyes had the dull, pathetic, wistful look of the half-witted. His guides brought him up to within a few yards of the white men, and the Nagas pointed to him with wild excitement, continually exclaiming:—

"The Eye! The Eye!"

Forrester asked Sher Jang to get from the people an explanation of the connection of this old man with the Nagas' refusal to march. The story, as told by the villager through the Naga head-man, was that the one-armed greybeard had been a brave warrior in his youth, and was one of a war party who, many years before, had ventured beyond the great waterfall. Of them all, only he had returned, without his right arm. When his people asked him what had happened to his companions, and how he had lost his arm, his only answer was "The Eye!" Ever since, his mind had been a blank. He could tell them nothing, had no recollection of what had happened; and the people had kept him with them, showing him the veneration which simple races often pay to the half-witted.

The white men were mystified. The story seemed incredible, yet there was the man in proof of it.

"None of the people have ever been beyond the fall since?" asked Forrester.

"None of us," was the reply, "but we have

seen men go sometimes, and we have never known them to return. Yes; there was one who returned. He was fair of skin like these lords, and wore clothes like them. There were two who went, but only one returned. Some of our people saw him climbing the mountains near the fall, and the little men were running after him, but he escaped them, and went into the forest."

"Who are the little men?" Forrester asked.

"They are men like monkeys," replied the man, holding his hand about four feet from the ground to indicate their height. "They are the men who take the wood from us."

On further questioning, the men explained that the country beyond the falls was destitute of large trees, and the little men paid the villagers for timber cut in the forest. This timber was conveyed to a certain spot some distance short of the waterfall, and removed thence by the little men to their home in the mountains, which the villagers had never beheld.

"How long ago was the white man seen?" Forrester asked.

The man held up his hands with fingers outspread.

"Redfern, to a certainty!" Jackson exclaimed. "We must go on and get to the bottom of this mystery. It's horrible to think of what may possibly happen to Beresford."

"Ay, there's something uncanny beyond," Mackenzie said, thoughtfully.

"Whatever they mean by the Eye, it is clear that something gruesome goes on among the little men," said Forrester. "There's nothing for it but to forge ahead, and tackle them if there's the ghost of a chance for us. What do you say? Are you game to stick to it, even if we can't persuade the Nagas to come?"

"Ay, I'm for going on," said Mackenzie.

"I too," said Jackson. "We can but try, and I don't suppose the little men, whoever they are, have rifles. Let us start at once."

CHAPTER VI

THE IRON SHUTTER

"YOU come with us, Sher Jang?" asked Forrester.

"Sahib, I am your servant," the man replied, simply.

"And you, Hamid?"

The cook pulled nervously at his beard, turned up the whites of his eyes, shot a savage glance at the *shikari*, then said in a voice which all his resolution could not prevent from trembling:—

"Sir, I step out like a man. One volunteer is worth tons of pressed beef."

As the old man was led forward, the Nagas pointed to him with wild excitement, continually exclaiming, "The Eye! The Eye!"

"Which means that without these idiotic carriers we shall have to travel light," said Forrester. "Just put up enough food for two days; we'll carry it somehow among us. We must leave the tent with the Nagas. They had better remain here until we return."

"Can't we take more grub?" Jackson asked.

"If we don't do it in two days we shan't do it at all, so it's useless overloading ourselves. We risk losing the tent, of course, but that can't be helped."

Their preparations were quickly made, and they set off while the morning was still young. Hamid Gul carried his cooking utensils, plates, knives and forks, and other articles; Sher Jang shouldered some blankets, in which he had wrapped a quantity of ammunition, and the three white men divided the food among them. Each of the party had his rifle slung behind his back.

Their guides, a dozen of the villagers, harnessed themselves to tree trunks, which they dragged through the wood and down the rocky slope beyond. It had been arranged before they started that the white men should follow at some little distance, so that the natives, in case of need, might repudiate knowledge of them, and escape all responsibility for bringing the strangers to the neighbourhood of the falls.

At the foot of the slope they came to a rivulet. Without the Naga head-man, Sher Jang could not hold any oral communication with the villagers; but they managed to convey to him the information that the smaller falls of which they had spoken were a little way down-stream; the larger falls lay a much greater distance in the other direction. Some minutes were occupied in forming the balks of timber into a raft. When this was done half the party of natives swam to the farther bank, carrying ropes attached to the raft, and then the two sections hauled their wares against the sluggish current, tramping along towpaths which must have been trodden by several generations of their forebears.

The view ahead was shut out by the trees that grew almost to the edge of the winding stream; but it was not long before the white men, walking about half a mile behind their guides, were aware of a dull rumble that grew louder moment by moment as they proceeded.

"That's the fall!" cried Jackson. "We can't be far away."

"A pretty big one, by the sound of it," Forrester remarked. "Small falls make a sort of crash—this is more of a roar. Perhaps we shall find a second Niagara."

"I'm fair flummoxed!" said Mackenzie, inconsequently.

"What about?"

"About yon Eye. You see, these folks were terrified by the storm: 'He speaks,' they said. Well, that was the thunder. By what the philosophers call parity of reasoning, the Eye is lightning. Well, lightning can take off a man's arm, and strike him daft or dead. But what about the little men up yonder? Are they scunnered at the Eye, too? What has the Eye to do with Beresford?"

"Trust a Scot to ask questions!" said Jackson. "But you won't reason it out, Mac; you'll just have to wait, like an Englishman."

"Och, man! I want facts. Give me facts, and I'll draw my own conclusions."

"Well, this row is a fact, and a stunning one," said Forrester. "It's time we caught sight of the fall that's making such an uproar."

But they marched on for a couple of hours without seeing any sight of a waterfall, or even any quickening of the current. The noise had gradually increased to a stupendous din, and thoughts of their ultimate errand were overborne by excitement as they looked eagerly ahead for the mass of falling water. At last the belt of forest land came to an abrupt end, and they looked forth over a wide rocky plain in the midst of which was an immense lake that appeared to be considerably below the level of the surrounding country. From it ran the stream whose course they were following, and a larger stream far to the right.

Beyond the plain rose the mountains, towering up peak behind peak to the summits of the snowy range in the remote distance. The three men halted involuntarily, struck both by the majesty of the scene and by the deafening roar which almost drowned their voices.

"Man, it's grand!" Mackenzie shouted.

"But where is it?" Forrester bawled in his ear.

They looked all around, but saw nothing to account for the thunderous noise. The sky was overcast, and a layer of mist obscured the lower foothills, though the heights beyond heaved their grey masses in clear undulations miles above. As they stood, a sunbeam stole through the clouds, and a rainbow flung its gay arch across the plain directly ahead of them.

"There's rain over there," said Jackson, at the top of his voice.

"Only mist!" Forrester cried in reply.

For a few moments they gazed mutely upon

a sight that never loses its interest and wonder. Then Mackenzie smote his thigh, and cried like one in ecstasy:—

"Man—it's the Fall!"

The mist was rolling away as the sun gathered strength, yet the rainbow did not fade, but shone more brightly than ever over a space of perhaps one-eighth of a mile. And then the onlookers saw that what had hitherto seemed to them a part of the bank of mist was in reality a gigantic torrent of water, mingled with spray thrown up hundreds of feet from the unseen bottom. They watched it in silent awe. The villagers had described it as falling from the clouds into the depths of the earth. Their words appeared to be literally true. An eighth of a mile in width, the torrent poured over the edge of a tableland—a single huge step in the ascent to the plateaux of Tibet. Mist still hung above it, the enormous screen of spray concealed its lower part, and at the distance they still were from it the spectators could only just distinguish the movement of the mighty volume of water.

It had been arranged with their guides that they should remain on the spot where they first caught sight of the fall until the men had delivered their timber and returned. The delay gave them an opportunity of taking a meal. As they ate they amused themselves by guessing at the height of the fall. Forrester suggested that it was as high as St. Paul's; Jackson thought this estimate too low; and Mackenzie astonished the others by declaring that he wouldna wonder but it was fully as high as Ben Lomond.

It was three hours before the natives returned, and the white men, setting forth impatiently at length to skirt the lake and reach the foot of the hills on the western side of the fall, found to their amazement that they had nearly five miles to go before they came level with it. Then they were struck dumb by the full magnificence of the scene. The spray itself, rising like steam from a gigantic cauldron, attained to the height of St. Paul's. The two Englishmen were prepared to admit that the top of the fall was even higher than the summit of Ben Lomond; but Mackenzie's calculating eye gauged more nearly to the truth.

"I would say it's two thousand feet, or a wee bit more," he said, and his friends laughed at the incongruous use of the word "wee" in such a connection.

They found that the scarp over which the torrent poured extended for miles on each side. It appeared to be almost perpendicular, though away to the left it became more broken. On the right, except for one or two steep and rugged spurs, it was one continuous wall of rock.

The path they had followed round the western shore of the lake brought them to a small wooden bridge spanning an inflowing stream. It somewhat resembled the bridge delineated in the well-known willow pattern. To this the raft of timber was moored. Evidently it was part of the plan for maintaining the secrecy of the hill community that purchasers and venders should come into contact as seldom as possible; or perhaps the woodcutters' own fear of the Eye kept them from approaching nearer to the dwelling of the "little men." No doubt the timber would presently be fetched, and drawn along the stream into the lake, and thence to its destination.

The three men looked around for some signs of human habitation, but discovered none. A rough roadway, however, led from the bridge along the base of the precipice towards the fall, which appeared to be about half a mile distant. After a brief consultation they decided to make their way along this road. To be prepared for possible danger they first laid down their impedimenta and unslung their rifles. Then they set off, Forrester leading with the *shikari*.

After a while the path rose somewhat steeply on the face of the cliff, and they soon saw that it passed underneath the fall itself, the torrent of water forming a gigantic arch. When they arrived beneath this they found themselves in a dim twilight, the glassy sea-green surface of the watery arch reflecting a pallid hue upon their faces. They were perfectly dry, except for some flecks of spray dashed upon them from the base of the fall. At this spot they were three or four hundred feet above the surface of the lake, which boiled and foamed like an angry sea immensely magnified. The din was terrific; even the loudest shout would scarcely have been audible.

At their first entrance into this segmental tunnel Hamid Gul shrank back, appalled by the noise, the falling water, and the immense, tattered sheet of spray that rose from the seething cauldron hundreds of feet below. But seeing that his employers were pressing forward he pulled himself together, and hurried on close at Mackenzie's heels. The width of the path had diminished to a bare three feet, and as the party crept along it they instinctively clung to the wall of rock on their left hand. A strange attraction was exercised by the smooth arch of falling water on their right, inducing the same kind of vertigo which most

people experience when looking down from giddy heights.

So they passed through the furlong of tunnel. A hundred yards or so beyond the eastern end the path began to slope downwards as steeply as it had ascended on the other side, and within a short space the party found themselves once more almost on a level with the lake. Then the path came to an abrupt end, disappearing into the water that washed the base of the perpendicular cliff. Here they halted; it seemed that they could go no farther, that they must retrace their steps and explore in the other direction.

They could not make themselves heard one by another, but Mackenzie signed to the rest to stand fast; he remembered that beyond the bridge behind them there was no road except that which skirted the lake, and made the reasonable inference that the path by which they had come must, after all, lead somewhere. It occurred to him to test the depth of the water. Finding that it was no more than two feet, he took off his boots, rolled up his putties, and started to wade. In a few seconds he turned and beckoned to his companions. They followed his example, and on joining him found that he had come to a sharp corner of the precipice, which was cut at this point by an extraordinary rift. At the entrance it was perhaps forty feet wide. The sides were straighter and even nearer to the perpendicular than the face of the cliff bordering the lake. They gazed upwards in astonishment at the immense height. The top was so far above them that the sides seemed almost to touch, leaving only a narrow slit. Peering into the cleft, they saw nothing beyond the first hundred yards or so. Little light filtered through the opening at the top, and the floor of the rift was illuminated only faintly beyond the entrance.

Our party stood there in mute amazement. Mackenzie was the only one of them who knew anything of geology: a Scot always knows something of everything; and he surmised that the rift was the result of some titanic disruption of the earth in an age long past. It was as though the mass of solid rock had been rent asunder by a gigantic wedge, impelled by a cyclopean hammer—such a hammer as Thor wields in Norse myths.

It seemed of little use to enter the rift. No mortal men could make that their abode. But on passing beyond the entrance they soon found that further passage along the edge of the lake was impossible. The water still came right up to the face of the cliff, and the pathway—if it were a pathway—which they were treading sank ever deeper beneath the surface. There was nothing for it but to hark back, unless they were prepared to swim. Jackson suggested that possibly some side path branched from the rift, leading by a steep and zigzag ascent to the summit of this strange precipice.

Retracing their steps accordingly, they turned into the rift, donned their boots, and marched forward. The floor sloped gently upwards, the sides converged until the space between them was barely half what it had been at the entrance. Pressing on, they became aware that the rift was not straight, as they had believed. A sharp bend brought them upon a sight that caused them to halt, peer nervously upward and in front, and tighten their grasp upon their rifles. Three canoes lay tandem against the right-hand side of the rift—harmless objects in themselves, but rather perturbing as indications that men were somewhere in the neighbourhood. They were obviously intended for transporting persons across the lake without the necessity of making the passage under the fall. In the dim light they would scarcely have been visible from the entrance, even had the rift been straight; the bend effectually concealed them.

Once more the party halted. Shut in as they were by the high, close walls, the sound of the waterfall came to them now only as a dull rumble; but when they spoke it was in whispers. Apart from the risk of being heard by an unseen enemy, there was an atmosphere of mystery and awesomeness that weighed oppressively on their minds.

"What are we to do?" asked Jackson.

"Go on!" Forrester replied, firmly. "We can hardly be seen. The sides are so smooth and straight that no one could perch anywhere to molest us, except at the corners. We must be on our guard there."

"But surely no one can live here! Nothing could grow; there doesn't even appear to be moss on the rock, and the air's as stuffy as in a cave."

"Man, don't argufy!" said Mackenzie. "Straight ahead!"

They continued their course. Every now and again the rift turned sharply to one side or the other, and the smooth floor, unimpeded by loose rocks or boulders, always ascended more and more steeply as they advanced. Strangely enough, the higher they went the stuffier the air became, and the deeper their sense of oppression; or rather, perhaps, of nervous strain. Mackenzie, who had once been

down a coal-mine in Lanarkshire, suspected the presence of poisonous gases.

"There can't be fire-damp," he murmured, "but it may be carbonic acid. Bide a wee while I strike a match."

But this fear was dispelled when the flame burned brightly for a second or two. He extinguished it abruptly.

"Hoots! I'm an ass!" he said. "Someone may have seen the light; and if there are men about, I'd rather see them first than they us."

"My skin is tingling just as if I'd got a grip of the terminals of a battery," Jackson remarked.

"It's uncanny, and that's a fact," said Mackenzie. "But look, man! What's that?" he added, in a startled whisper, clutching Forrester by the arm with one hand, and pointing ahead with the other.

His comrades closed upon him, and peered into the semi-obscurity, their heads almost touching. A little to one side of them stood Sher Jang, impassive as ever, though he held his rifle with both hands, and his muscles were as taut as a bent spring. Behind, Hamid Gul's one eye bulged from its socket as he tiptoed to look over his master's shoulder.

A few yards to their front the rift made one of the sudden bends that formed such strange features of its course. It struck to the right at a sharp angle, so that the wall which had been on their left hand became almost perpendicular to their line of march. On its smooth rocky face, some eighteen or twenty feet above the ground, an extraordinary procession was moving across their line of vision from right to left, like shadows cast faintly upon a screen. The leading figure was that of a skeleton clothed about with a misty body shaped like a man in tourist costume: a tall frame, the bones standing out in black relief from the midst of a faint penumbra. Behind this trotted the skeleton forms of a number of almost naked dwarfs, no more than four feet in height, each bearing a spear upon his shoulder. At the rear came a second full-sized figure, taking long strides, like a schoolmaster at the tail of a line of boys. The shadowy surround of his skeleton widened towards the bottom like an academic gown.

The watchers held their breath, amazed at the weirdness of the dim shapes, and still more at the manner of their progress. There were no steps to be seen in the face of the cliff, yet the gait of the procession was unmistakably that of men descending a steep stairway. Foot by foot they moved downwards on their diagonal path; one by one they reached the floor of the rift; then, instead of walking along it towards the spectators, they seemed to descend into the earth, and in a few moments disappeared from view. Not a sound had accompanied them; no tramp of footsteps, no clash of weapons.

Drawing a long breath, the white men, tense and watchful, waited a little for some sign of their reappearance, but nothing more was seen. If the strange people had observed the group of onlookers, they had paid no heed to them. At last Mackenzie hurried forward to search for the steps and the subterranean passage to which they gave access. The rest of the party followed him, save Hamid Gul, who remained as one transfixed, shivering with awe.

When they came to the wall they were thrown into a state of utter consternation. The surface of the rock was wholly unbroken; there was neither stairway nor passage into the ground—the cliff was as smooth as polished granite. They looked upwards to the right along the rift; they passed their hands over the face of the rock, struck it here and there, probed with their rifles the floor—all was apparently solid. An uncomfortable feeling of creepiness stole over them. What mysterious secret lurked in this gloomy cleft in the mountain?

None of them had yet uttered a word. When Forrester spoke, it was in a whisper.

"Were they shadows?" he asked.

They turned about and looked back along the rift. There was no light between the walls. Far above, the sunlight illumined their summits, a bright streak in the gloom. But no shadow could have been cast so low.

"Och!" exclaimed Mackenzie, shaking himself. "We cannot get to the bottom of yon. Come away!"

Every man of them, without confessing it to the others, was thinking of the strange things they had heard in the forest village. Their minds were oppressed by the villagers' superstitious dread; it required an effort to proceed with the march, leaving this uncanny incident unexplained. But they braced themselves at Mackenzie's words. Whatever the explanation of the procession might be, it argued the presence of beings other than themselves in the cleft or its neighbourhood; and the remembrance of their errand nerved them to go on. If Captain Redfern's unfortunate companion were indeed held captive in this mysterious region, it appeared that they must look forward to something more than a straight fight; but they could not allow themselves to

be daunted by apparitions, which, after all, might have a simple explanation.

When they resumed their march it was with more caution than before. Despite themselves, they had a sense of being watched, of something impending, almost of helplessness, strange though this sensation was to their robust Western minds. Almost unconsciously they kept closer together, holding their rifles ready in one hand, and unbuttoning their revolvers with the other. Only Hamid Gul walked alone. He followed with trembling knees some yards in the rear, wishing that he had courage enough to run back to the entrance, where there were at least space and air.

They turned to the right with the rift. Soon the walls began to converge, and the twilight grew dimmer and dimmer. At one spot the passage was scarcely eight feet wide. Beyond this it widened again, and the light improved. Then, with startling suddenness, the silence behind them was broken by a harsh sound that caused them to jump round in a tingle of apprehension. It was like the rattling of heavy chains, followed by a loud grating squeak, and a second or two later by a metallic clang that echoed ominously in the narrow rift. The echoes died away; all was again silent.

Mackenzie had already started back, a vague inkling of what had happened freezing him to the marrow. In the semi-darkness he collided with Hamid Gul, who let out a yell and dropped his rifle, which fell with resounding crash on to the ground. The others hurried close on Mackenzie's heels. He reached the narrow passage recently left, and here, in the greater obscurity, he came full tilt against an obstacle that barred the way. His rifle clashed against it, and when his friends joined him they found that their escape was cut off by a huge iron shutter which filled the whole width of the passage.

Mackenzie struck a match, and held it aloft. To their dismay they saw that the shutter was at least twenty feet high. It fitted into grooves on either side and in the floor beneath, which the darkness had not allowed them to see when they passed a few minutes before. The upper part of the shutter was attached to two heavy chain cables, one on each side of the rift. These cables seemed to disappear into the walls another twenty feet or so above; but from the position of the trapped party, with the poor aid of match-light, it was impossible to see beyond the points at which the chains appeared to enter the rock. Lighting several matches together, however, Mackenzie held them high above his head, and the flame glinted for a moment upon a dark face peering down upon them over the top of the shutter. It was visible only for an instant, then it was gone; but in that instant the three men felt the culminating shock of amazement. In those features—the high cheekbones, the slanting eyes, the long, thin, grey moustache, they thought they recognised the countenance of the elder of the two Chinamen who had been the companions of their march—the man whom the bemused lad had called Wen Shih.

CHAPTER VII

PRISONERS!

"DID you see yon?" cried Mackenzie, turning to the others.

"The Chinky!" gasped Jackson, under his breath.

"Och, man! there's no need to moderate your voice. We've no hobgoblins or supernatural beings of any kind whatever to deal with, but just that ruffian of a fellow I've had my suspicions about all along. That's an established fact."

Mackenzie spoke loudly and emphatically; he was indeed a little sore at the recollection of his own uneasiness. To his practical mind the secret stairway and the mysterious procession counted for nothing against the solid fact that here was the Chinaman whom he had mistrusted.

"He has shut us in," he added. "Well, he may be sorry for it yet. We'll just gang on, my laddies."

"But how about getting back?" asked Jackson.

"Eh, now! That's not a practical question. The shutter is a sort of portcullis, you may say, defending a sort of castle. Well, we will assume that this Beresford man is a prisoner in the castle. To get him out, the first thing was to get in ourselves. That we have done. What's more, we can't get out just at present, and, speaking for myself, I'll not go out without Beresford, if he's alive."

"I'm with you, Mac," said Forrester. "But, after all, we don't know that Beresford is here."

"We don't *know*, but there's good warrant for the suspicion. D'ye ken what I've been thinking? Beresford and the other man happened upon some secret hereabout, and the inhabitants—Chinese, by the look of it—collared them to prevent the secret getting abroad. That ruffian guessed from our line of march that we were coming here—just out of curiosity, maybe,

for he couldn't have known anything about Beresford——"

"Unless he was here at the time, and left after Redfern's escape," Forrester suggested.

"Ah! That didn't occur to me. Anyway, he gave us the slip in the scrub back yonder, just to prepare for our reception if we came along, and I acknowledge that the nature of our reception is a disagreeable surprise."

"Whatever the motive for detaining Beresford may be, it applies to us too," said Forrester.

"True, and therefore we'll have to watch out. It's a difficult situation."

"They might starve us, or murder us, or anything," said Jackson, somewhat nervously.

"There's just one thing against that," returned Mackenzie, "and that's the fact that our carriers are not with us. The Chinky knows that; he'll guess or discover that they're waiting for us in the village away yonder, and fea that if we don't return they'll hie back to Dibrugarh, and give the alarm."

Taking Jackson by the arms, they led him down the rift, and a few yards away they came upon Hamid Gul, lying with relaxed limbs on the ground.

"What do you think he'll do then?" Forrester asked.

"Keep us here until we're starved or cowed into submission, and then let us go under a vow to say nothing at all. But it's no good speculating. We're in the castle; the first thing is to explore it. Come away!"

There seemed nothing better to be done. The party turned their backs on the shutter, and once more marched along the rift. The events of the last half-hour had made Mackenzie more uneasy than he cared to admit; but as the most level-headed of the party he felt the necessity of keeping up the spirits of his companions, and resolutely tried to conquer his misgivings.

They pushed on through the rift, searching the wall on either side for signs of an outlet; but the rock was still as smooth as heretofore. At last a couple of unusually sharp bends brought them to another constricted passage, which, like the one behind them, was closed by an iron shutter. Checked by this, they stood for a few moments in absolute silence, looking at one another without any attempt to disguise their alarm. The distance between the two shutters was, perhaps, 120yds. On each side rose an unscalable wall. They were prisoners, as it were, at the bottom of a well.

The silence was broken by a wail from Hamid Gul. It served to brace up the white men.

"Whisht!" exclaimed Mackenzie. "Wait while I strike a light."

He kindled a match, and raised it above his head.

"This shutter is not so high as the other," he said. "We've just got to climb over it."

"How?" asked Forrester. "It's twelve

or fourteen feet high, and as smooth as a board. There's nothing to stand on."

"Except our shoulders," Mackenzie retorted. "Here, Sher Jang, you're the broadest of us. Come and stand just here. I'll mount you; then Bob, you're the slimmest; you swarm up. On my shoulders you'll be able to see over. Take the matches. Keep a look-out, Dick, and if you see anyone above threaten mischief, just fire off your revolver—not to hit him, you understand. Diplomacy comes before war."

Sher Jang stooped while Mackenzie mounted his back, then slowly rose to his full height. Mackenzie rested his hands on the shutter, and Jackson clambered up the human pedestal, and grasped the top of the iron gate.

Next moment he fell back with a stifled cry. Mackenzie caught him in his arms; but his weight was too much for the stability of the column. It tottered, and all three men fell sprawling on the ground.

"The top was red hot!" cried Jackson, lifting himself and rubbing his elbow.

"Hold up your hands, man!" cried Mackenzie, picking up the fallen box of matches. He struck a light and examined Jackson's palms. "Your nerves are all to pieces," he added. "Yon's no red hot, or your hands would be blistered and branded red. There's something in it, though. Look here, Dick!"

They saw a faint purple streak about an inch wide across the middle of the fingers of each hand.

"Any pain now?" asked Forrester.

"No; only a sort of tingle," Jackson replied, feeling a little ashamed of himself. "I was taken by surprise, but it really is hot."

"I'll have a try," said Forrester. "Get up again, Mac."

Once more Mackenzie stood on the *shikari's* shoulders, and Forrester clambered up as Jackson had done. Forewarned, he did not start back and upset the balance when he touched the top of the shutter; but he removed his fingers from it quickly, and called out that it was certainly very hot—too hot to grasp while he hauled himself over. He slid down, Mackenzie leapt to the ground, and they looked at one another in a sort of despair.

"Can't we blow down the shutter with our cartridges?" Forrester at length suggested.

"We might not succeed, and, anyway, it would be a loss of ammunition we may badly need before long," replied Mackenzie.

"What in the world are we to do?" muttered Jackson, peering about him anxiously.

"The fact is——" Forrester was beginning; but at this moment they were all startled, and yet relieved, at hearing a human cry from above them.

"Who's that?" Mackenzie called, lifting a lighted match above his head. For a moment they searched the face of the rock in vain; but then the light struck dimly upon a head, projecting, as it were, out of the solid wall thirty feet above them. They could distinguish neither shape nor feature, but before the match went out they saw a second head projecting, like a gargoyle from a Gothic wall, close beside the first.

"Who's that?" Mackenzie called again.

"Gentlemen!"

The word floated down eerily; it was as though a gargoyle were speaking, and the voice was that of the younger Chinaman whom they knew—high pitched, yet low in tone, hardly more than a whisper.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the August and Venerable welcomes you to his sanctuary. Uninvited you come, but none the less are you welcome. The August and Venerable will extend to you such hospitality as lies within his means. But it is not meet that armed parties should enter the holy precincts. Be content, therefore; withdraw to the lower gate, and leave your weapons there. When you return, this upper gate will be opened to you, and I shall have the honour and privilege of introducing you to the Presence."

This speech was delivered in the dull, dreamy, expressionless tone which had characterised all the young man's utterances, except in those few tense minutes succeeding his rescue from the elephant—the monotonous sing-song of a child nervously reciting a lesson.

"The 'Presence' is that one-armed rascal beside him, I suppose," whispered Forrester. "The poor weed says what he is told to say. What shall we do?"

"We're in an awkward fix," Jackson began, but Mackenzie cut him short.

"Things aren't so hopeless as that," he said, quickly. "We'll not part with our arms—our only protection. We don't know when we may need them. I'll answer the fellow." Raising his voice, he said: "We refuse to lay down our arms. We have no hostile intentions—we're as meek as lambs—but the shutting of the gates is a dashed unfriendly act, and makes us mighty doubtful about our welcome. Lift this gate, and lead us to the presence of the August and Venerable. We demand an audience with him."

His comrades thought that a more con-

ciliatory manner and more formal phrases might have served them better, but they said nothing. There was no reply from above; they supposed that the young Chinaman was translating to his master, though they heard no sound. It was too dark to see the heads without artificial light; and after a minute or two had passed in silence Mackenzie struck a match, and held it so that its light would fall on the spot where the shapes had been seen. But the wall was blank; the gargoyles had disappeared.

"What's going on now?" Forrester murmured.

"Maybe they're sending someone to work the machinery," answered Mackenzie.

They waited silently, expecting every moment to hear the harsh grating of the rising shutter and the rattle of the chains. But minutes passed, and there was no sound except the hard panting breaths of Hamid Gul. Gradually, however, they became conscious of a strange feeling of oppression. The mustiness of the air, which they had felt ever since they entered the rift, became impregnated with a subtle new odour. At first they paid little attention to it, merely remarking on it one to another. But presently Jackson began to sway on his feet.

"I feel funny," he said, slowly. "Getting—awfully—sleepy."

"Hold up, man!" said Mackenzie, sharply, as Jackson staggered against him. "Dick, take him by the arm; we'll walk him about."

"If I can," returned Forrester. "I feel uncommonly drowsy, too."

They took Jackson by the arms, and led him down the rift in the direction of the first shutter. A few yards away they passed Hamid Gul, lying with relaxed limbs on the ground. With growing alarm Mackenzie tried to hurry the pace, but his companions became moment by moment heavier on his hands. After a minute or two he let Jackson's arm go without knowing it. In a few seconds more his grip of Forrester relaxed, and he walked on two or three paces alone. Then he, too, fell a prey to the overmastering influence of the atmosphere.

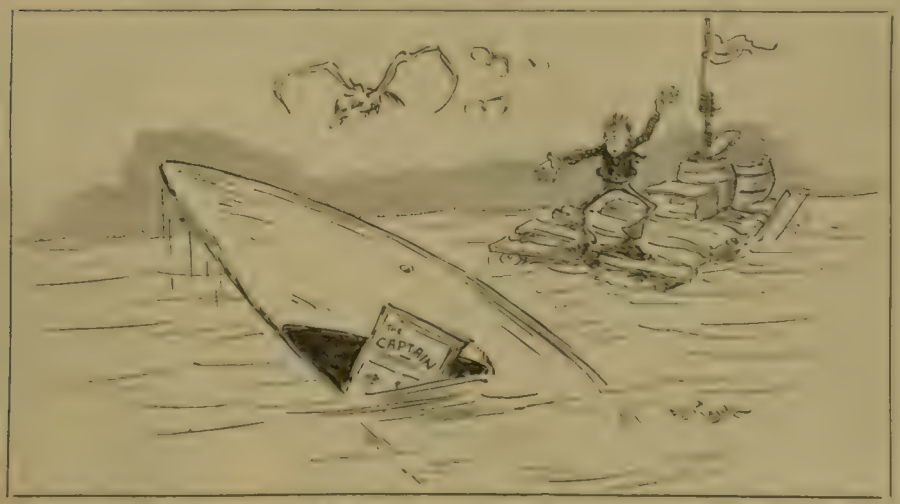
"Hold up, I'm telling you!" he muttered, staggering and reaching out with his hands.

Next moment, without volition of his own, he sat down on the ground, striving, like a man half drunk, to keep himself erect, and declaring to himself that he was "quite all right." But his hands fell limply to his sides, his body swayed gently, his head nodded, and in a few seconds he, like the rest, was prone in unconsciousness.

(*To be continued.*)

"CAPTAIN" OVERBOARD!

A Sad Sea Story



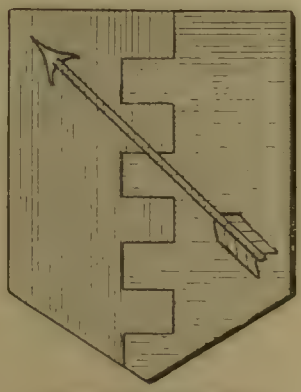
Castaway Cabin-boy: "Great submarines! There's the ship's library blown overboard, and that brute of a shark has swallowed it! How *am* I to get through the time till the usual passing vessel picks me up in the twenty-seventh chapter?"

Arms of Mackenzie.

Azure. A stags's head cabossed, or.

The Sporting Side of Heraldry

By
C. L. ROSS THOMAS, M.A.



Arms of Colyer Family.

Per pale, embattled gules and azure. An arrow in bend, or, barbed, and flighted, argent, point upwards.

"ENGLAND is a strong land and a sturdy; full of game and of mirth, and of men ofttimes able to game and to mirth, free men of heart and with tongue; but more able and more ready with hand than with tongue."

Thus wrote Bartholomew Anglicus, a dweller in these islands before the days of Chaucer, and it is interesting to note how much of this old spirit of sport is recorded in the blazoning of our forefathers' arms. For it was one function of heraldry, and perhaps not the least important, to record both famous sporting incidents, and also any special predilections in sport of the original possessor of the cognisance. How many gallant days in woodland glade and coppice, how many brave meetings and deeds of repute on breezy uplands, are recorded on the time-worn escutcheons that lie on carven tomb or stained-glass window!

Heraldry in the Middle Ages served, like modern photography, to make permanent the memory of great athletic events, and, like our silver cups and medals, it was often enough a prize intended to stimulate the worthy ambitions of the descendants of a man who had accomplished something, or at least to help prevent them from disgracing his memory.

Of all the sports delineated on shield and helm, hunting was probably the most important. Celt and Saxon, Viking and Norman alike loved and honoured the arts of the chase. A knowledge of venery, with all its kindred crafts, was indispensable to a man who aspired to knightly rank, and—next to war—it was esteemed the finest worldly occupation.

Stags, bucks, harts, and hinds are to be met with—heraldically—in a variety of positions. For example, "at gaze"—that is, standing still looking at the spectator, as in the case of the golden bucks at gaze of the Rogers family. The Robinsons have on their shield black bucks trippant—that is, moving lightly forward, one foot up. If lying down at rest, the heralds blazoned the animal as "lodged"; thus, a favourite badge of King Richard II. was a white hart lodged.

A frequent charge or crest is a stag's head "cabossed" (full face), and this is borne by the Chief of the Clan Mackenzie. Since one of the most picturesque trophies of the chase was—and, indeed, still is—formed by the antlers of a stag, we find such also in heraldry—the antlers being properly called "attires" and their branches "tynes"; for example, Lord Somers's shield bears, sable, a chevron or, between three attires of a stag affixed to the scalp, argent.

The fox, which appears frequently on coat armour, could scarcely have been adopted as emblematic, since it signifies deceit, cunning, and rapacity; nay, surely it is to commemorate some grand cross-country gallops of bygone days in pursuit of old Reynard. King Henry IV. bore as one of his badges a fox's tail, though one would have thought that he was kept too busy in hunting rebels to find time for the pursuit of the brush.

Boar-hunting was a sport greatly enjoyed by the chivalry of Europe, especially in Austria; and one must not forget that knighthood was international. English knights, as brothers-in-arms and guests of foreigners, would have ample opportunity for this sport. So the

boar appears frequently on our shields, as a memento, no doubt, of some great pig-sticking encounters which varied the monotony of siege or campaign. The boar's head of the Gordons is especially well known; as were once also the wild boars which supported the arms of the fateful Richard III.

That wolf-hunting was once obtainable in this country is evidenced by the tribute of three hundred wolves' heads per annum, which King Edgar in the tenth century required from the native Welsh prince. And there is the story, too, of Llewelyn and the faithful Gelert.

Whether or not wolves were thus exterminated at an early date in Britain, they would be plentiful in the mountains of Switzerland, Austria, France, and Spain till a much later date; and no doubt our English knights met them in their wanderings abroad. Maybe some warriors adopted the wolf as emblematic of ferocity; but it is very possible that the white wolf of the Mortimers, a great family of the Welsh borderland, was devised from the sport of wolf-hunting. So, too, for example, the family of Wallsalle bore, argent, a wolf passant sable.

That lank, yellow-bodied, fierce-eyed animal, known as the wild cat, now so rare, was during the Middle Ages far more frequently to be encountered in our forests and on our heaths. It is blazoned the "cat-a-mountain," and is always represented "guardant" (sitting down, one paw up, and mouth open). To slay a wild cat, especially at close quarters, would be no small feat for a youthful warrior; for men did not hunt in armour, and the cat might well be committed to the hunter's shield.

The sport of otter-hunting was well known and practised in mediæval England, and the otter in heraldry is usually blazoned with a fish in his mouth. The family of Lutterell bears, argent, a fess, between three otters sable, though this is probably a punning coat, since the Norman word for otter was "loutre."

Big game is well represented in heraldry, and no doubt, in some cases, those who acquired the arms had encountered the animals in question during journeys over the old caravan route to the crusades. Thus, for instance, Sir William D'Aunay, having killed a lion, cut off a paw and presented it to our King, who granted him a lion's gamb erased or, on his crest.

Bears were not only to be encountered by our adventurous knights in the mountains abroad, but were regularly imported into England for the savage but popular sport of bear-baiting. Perhaps the most famous heraldic bear is that of the Nevilles, Earls of Warwick. Elephants appear occasionally; for instance, as one of the supporters of the Earls of Powis, and as one of the crests of Pakington. So, too, tigers, leopards, panthers, and buffaloes are borne by various families; though probably, for the most part, rather for their emblematic value in respect of fierce virtues, than for triumphs of the chase.

Besides the animals themselves, there are other mementoes of hunting which appear in heraldry, especially the cheerful bugle-horn, whose blasts once awoke the

EXPLANATION OF HERALDIC TERMS

Badge	A device apart from shield or crest, and often worn on caps or sleeves of family retainers.
Bend	A diagonal bar across the shield.
Bend, In, or Bendwise ...	In the same position as a bend.
Blazon	To give the proper technical description of arms.
Cabossed	Full face.
Chevron	Lines on a shield like the rafters of a house.
Chief, In	On the top part of the shield.
Combed and Wattled ...	Refers to the comb and gills of a cock.
Couped	Having a clean cut edge.
Embattled	Having a partition line like the battlements on a castle.
Erased	Having a jagged edge.
Escutcheon	Shield.
Fess	A horizontal bar across the shield.
Fetterlocks	Shackles for fastening legs of animals or birds.
Gamb	The foreleg of a beast.
Gaze, at	Standing still, facing the spectator.
Gorged	Collared.
Guardant	Sitting down, one paw raised, mouth open.
Guttée d'or	Sprinkled with drops of gold.
Guttée du sang ...	Sprinkled with drops of blood.
Lodged	Lying at rest.
Pale	A perpendicular bar down the shield.
Palewise	In the shape of a pale.
Passant	Walking with head in profile.
Proper	In natural colours.
Quarter, to	To place on a coat of arms.
Sejant	Sitting.
Supporters	Figures—*e.g.*, of animals—on either side of shield as though holding it up.
Trippant	Moving forward, one foot raised.

echoes of many an English vale where now is to be heard the grim buzzer of pit and factory. Thus the family of Hunter appropriately bears, argent, three bugle-horns bendwise gules, and a bugle-horn forms part of the arms of the Lancashire Postlethwaites.

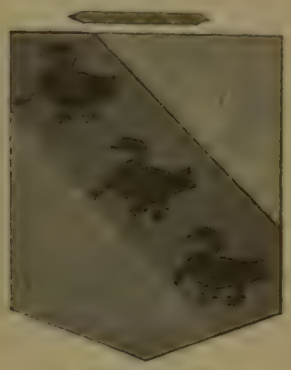
Horsemanship, a *sine qua non* of mediæval knighthood, is well represented in heraldry. The White Horse of Kent is of very ancient origin, and it is supposed that the white horses, which are formed by cutting out the turf on our chalk downs (at Uffington, in Berkshire, for instance), were made in memory of Saxon victories.

Some deed of sheer hard riding was often recorded on the horseman's shield by the five-pointed star-like "mullet," this representing, at least in late heraldry, the rowel of a spur. Thus the arms of the Haye family is, argent, a mullet gules, and mullets appear, too, in the arms of Sutherland and of Douglas.

Arms of the Drayson family.

Both the crest and the mullets (spurs) point to some exploit of horsemanship. The bend represents a ladder against a castle wall.

A riding exploit in which speed was momentous is probably recorded by the presence on shield or helm of a Pegasus or flying horse. Thus, the crest of the Drayson family of Kent is a flying horse "guttée du sang," with the motto *venio, volans* (I come flying)—or could these flying horses have been daring prophecies of our days of aviation? The heraldic idea and desire for flight, if not the achievement, is also evidenced by the vol or demi-vol (wings or a wing of a bird), which was frequently adopted as a crest.



Shouldon of Kent.

Argent, on a bend gules, three swans or.

The Scudamores of the Welsh borders bear, gules, three stirrups with buckles and straps or; and the family of Ferrers bears, argent, six horseshoes sable.

The joy of the crystal trout stream, with its brown, pebbly bed, its emerald banks, its sparkling rapids and hushed pools, was not monopolised by the monks alone. Our warlike ancestors were fully alive to the quiet joys of angling, and in order that posterity should not dare to doubt their stories of rod and line, they defiantly quartered the scaly trophies on their shields. Emblematically, however, a fish represented chastity, and was believed to be the first creature created by God, so we must not assign them all to an angling origin. Fishes are portrayed "naiant" (swimming), "hauriant" (as if rising to the surface for breath), "uriant" (diving head downwards), and "embowed" (with body curved). So frequently and diversely do fish appear on coat armour, that they are considered a special branch of heraldry, and are dealt with in a book called "The Heraldry of Fish," by Moule.

Greenford of Levanton, Kent.

Gules, a chevron ermine between three squirrels, sejant, or.

Curiously enough, the dolphin was reckoned the King of the Fishes, and is borne by many families, notably by Franklin. Naturally the ferocious pike was a favourite, and is on the arms of Lucy of Charlecote, Warwickshire, though this is probably due to the fact that the old name for a pike was "luce." The Troutebeck family bears, azure, three trouts fretted (interlaced) in triangle, heads or, tails argent. So, too, the Whalley family bears whales, the

Herring family herrings, and Salmon, of Wildheath, Chester, bears salmon. It may be noted in passing, that these punning devices were considered very good jests in mediæval times, when punning was far from being bad form. The family of Gascoigne quarters a conger-eel's head couped, and the Melvilles bear, sable, a chevron between three fish-hooks argent.

The art and sport of fowling is well represented in heraldry, first and foremost being the favourite branch of falconry. If one could sit on some magic carpet, and transport oneself back to a fair summer morning in rustic England of the fourteenth century, one could see many a gallant party of courtly squires and dames scouring the hills with their favourite hawk or merlin on wrist, or loosed for a flight. So, too, in the evenings amid the great flaring flambeaux and rude profusion of the great baronial halls and manor houses, one might watch the sturdy little birds sitting on their perches.

Arms of Wiseman.

Sable, a chevron ermine, between three cronels of a tilt spear, argent. This shield commemorates some achievement at a tournament.

John of Gaunt, brother of the Black Prince, bore as his badge two falcons holding fetterlocks in their beaks; and a badge of King Richard II. was a white falcon. The crest of the Earl of Mountcashell is a goshawk, seizing a coney, both proper. Falcons are often blazoned "belled and jessed"—that is, having little bells and leather straps on their legs. Falconers were wont sometimes to make use of what was called a "lure" —that is, two wings joined at the tips, which they threw up into the air like a fowl, to decoy their hawks. Thus, for instance, the family of Wavre bears, gules, a lure stringed and braced (fastened) argent.

The grandeur of the eagle naturally impressed the heraldic mind, especially as the soaring wingster was then far more frequent about the wilder parts of England. The eagle was reckoned the royal or imperial bird, just as the lion was the royal beast. William de Valence, a powerful Norman baron, bore on his shield an imperial eagle. The famous two-headed eagle of Germany is supposed to represent two eagles joined, to symbolise the union of Roumania with the rest of the empire, since the emblem of each was an eagle. The Holy Roman Empire, carrying on the tradition of real Roman domination, was proud to bear the device of the victorious Roman legions.

The crest of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, is an eagle carrying an infant, and the origin is a romantic one.

It is said that long ago an eagle, having built a nest in Terlestowe Wood, conveyed there a child clothed in a red mantle. The Lord of Lathom had the infant boy rescued, adopted him, and he grew up to become the father of John Stanley.

For hundreds of years past the dazzling and graceful swan, gliding over lake or stream, has helped to beautify the noble landscape of many a fair domain of Britain. It is scarcely to be wondered at that it was a favourite cognisance of chivalry. It formed one of the royal badges of Henry IV., and the famous emblem of the De Bohuns of Hereford was a swan, ducally gorged (collared) and chained. So, too, the family of Leyham bears, gules, a swan argent, membered or (*i.e.*, having golden beak and legs). The family of Edger bears as a crest, a swan, holding in its beak a horseshoe, and the Calders of Muirtowne a swan swimming in a loch bordered with flags.

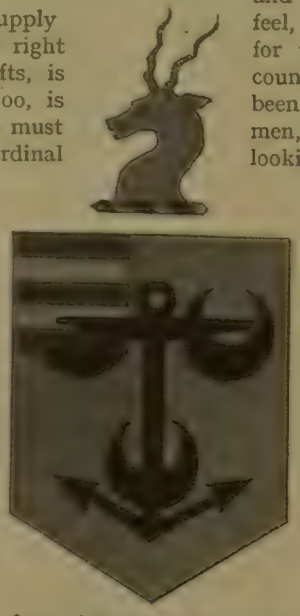
The sporting qualities of the gamecock, so dear to our eighteenth century ancestors, were not overlooked by the earlier heralds. He is usually blazoned as specially "combed, wattled, and spurred" in a different tincture (colour) to the rest of his body. The family of Cockaine bears, azure, three cocks argent, armed, crested, and jelloped (combed) proper (natural colour). The cock, apart from its association with the Gospel, was emblematic of pluck and cheery alertness, and was often accompanied by the motto, "While I live I crow."

An English manorial estate could scarcely be considered complete without its heronry. Herons were the usual quarry at which hawks were flown, and the heronries were, and indeed still are, some of the most picturesque corners of old-fashioned parks. Mediæval *chefs* prided themselves on bringing the heron becomingly to table, and like the peacock "in his pride," this big bird not infrequently appeared at royal banquets. The crest of the Beckfords is a heron's head erased or, gorged with (having

round its neck) a collar fleurie, gules, in the beak a fish, argent.

Before the days when "the villainous saltpetre was digged out of . . . the friendly earth" fowlers were accustomed to bring down their quarry with short, blunt-headed arrows, sometimes having three heads; these arrows were shot from a crossbow, and were called birdbolts. Thus, for instance, the family of Risdon bears, argent, three triple-headed birdbolts, sable.

The grey goose, so famous for supplying the English archers with the right feathers for their clothyard shafts, is represented in heraldry, and so, too, is the wild duck, whose reedy abode must be sought in nocturnal quests. Cardinal Pole's father bore as his crest on a wreath a cormorant, trussing (preying upon) a fish, all proper; and the Jackson family of March, Cambridgeshire, bears a sheldrake—a kind of mixture between a goose and a duck. The family of Fisher bears, or, three kingfishers proper; and the Cornish chough, a species of blackbird, is frequently to be met with on the arms of Cornish families; for instance, on those of Colebrooke. It is represented sable, with beak and legs gules.



Arms of Hodges of Wareham
The cantor and the anchor point to exploits at sea.

The same qualities which make the canine breed dear to modern sportsmen — its peculiar sympathy with man, its fidelity, and the boisterous joy of the chase—made it dear also to our forefathers. So we find hounds of various types depicted by the heralds. Perhaps the most important is the talbot. This was a kind of hunting dog, between a hound and a beagle, having large snout and rounded, hanging ears. It was the famous badge of the great Talbots, Earls of Shrewsbury. So, too, the crest of the West Country Caines family is a talbot, and the Shirrington arms are, argent, a talbot passant sable.

The greyhound was another sporting dog well represented on shield and helm; for instance, the white greyhound courant (running) was a favourite badge of the Royal Tudors.

The heraldic "alant" was a short-eared mastiff, and appears as one of the supporters of the arms of Lord Dacre, who commanded the English reserve at the great Border battle against the Scots at Flodden Field, 1513.

Hounds are carefully blazoned in heraldry according to the sport they represent; thus, for example, a bloodhound was said to be "on scent," other dogs "beating," or "coursing." The family of Moore bears, argent, three greyhounds coursing, in pale, sable, collared or.

If we moderns, with our comparatively wide, clear streets, our sanitation, our open parks, and our big, light-admitting windows, feel, as winter departs, a great longing for the fresh air, scented fields, and country hedgerows, what must have been the longing of mediæval townsmen, cooped up in dark houses, overlooking narrow, noisome streets, and huddled within the defensive town walls? So they loved woodcraft, moorcraft, fieldcraft, and all that appertains to the open — these denizens of old England; nor did they disdain, even in those days of war, to take as their honourable emblems the smaller creatures of stream and spinney. Thus, there are moles on the arms of Nangothan; a tortoise on those of Gawdy; hedgehogs on the shield of Herries and of Speechly; squirrels on that of Tweemlow; and, above all, the famous grasshopper crest of Sir Thomas Gresham, prince of Elizabethan merchants.

The badger, variously called "brock" or "gray" (and thus, incidentally, perhaps the origin of many place names and surnames), is borne by the families of Broke and Brokelsby.

Beavers are emblematic of cleverness and industry. On a window in New Inn Hall, London, appears the arms, argent, a beaver erected (in an upright posture) sable, devouring a fish proper, armed gules.

Bees, besides representing steady work, were also noted for their loyalty to constituted authority (a rare virtue in feudal times); they are borne on the arms of the Rooe family.

Not only were the furred, finned, and feathered tribes frequently adopted on heraldic shields, but the background (called the field) of the escutcheon itself was often represented as fur, instead of metal, or painted wood, or leather. There are eight furs known to heraldry, of

which perhaps the most conspicuous are ermine (white with black spots), as on the arms of Wiseman, and vair (little pieces of skin like shields, alternately blue and white), as on the arms of Brewer of Kent.

The glamour of the sea, the fascination of swelling sails and flashing oars, were as keenly felt by the chivalry of old as by modern yachtsmen and rowing men. For them, too, the life-giving breezes swept over the sparkling, rippled surface; for them, too, fleecy white clouds moved over the blue heavens; for them, too, distant horizons were silver or golden, the depths below were of mystic blue, and purple and green transparency—aye! and for them, too, lurked the same perils in the slumbrous summer seas. Their pleasure in such things, the inarticulate records of brave days now long since passed, is crudely depicted in the formal figures of ancient shields. There is, for instance, the heraldic ship known as a lymphad; it has oars, one mast with sail furled, and colours flying. Most frequently it appears on the arms of Scottish clan chieftains; for example, on those of the Lords of Lorne, Macdougal, Macalister, McNeil, Maclaren, and Gunn.

Arms of Ridgway.
Did these wings show our forefather's yearning for airmanship?

Arms of Hunter.
Argent, three bugle-horns bendwise, gules.

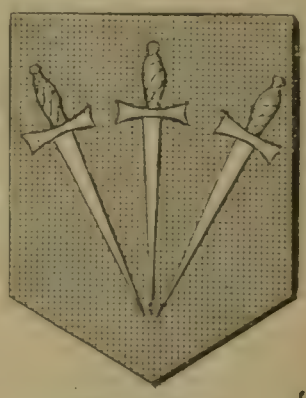
The shield of the English Cinque Ports—a group of maritime towns, which were originally responsible for providing our national fleet—is: "England (*i.e.*, three lions) dimidiating (*i.e.*, halving) three ships hulls in pale," and the sight of these same hulls must have preceded the doom of many a savage Channel pirate, such as Eustace "the Monk."

So, too, a ship was the device on the banner of Bristol, and under it the men of that city marched and fought during the Wars of the Roses. Conversely, it was a picturesque custom of the Middle Ages for the sails of real ships to be embellished with the arms of the owner; thus Richard Neville, the great Earl of Warwick, bore his arms worked on to the sails of his war vessels.

Some feat of daring on the "high" or "narrow seas" is recorded when the partition lines of the shield are wavy, *i.e.*, representing rolling waves. The naval crown, another badge of nautical exploits, is a golden circle, surmounted with alternate sterns and square-sails of ships, and was granted, for instance, as an honourable augmentation to the arms of Nelson.

So, too, an anchor is borne by seafaring families, as Hodges of Wareham; and the family of Cavell bears gules, three sails argent. The marine wolf, as the heralds called seals, was emblematic of sailorlike watchfulness, and appears on the arms of Fennor; sea-dogs, sea-horses, and sea-lions are all to be met with on the shields and helms of those who frequented the deep.

Of all knightly sports, none was held in greater esteem than jousting—the mimic battle in which the combatants tilted with lance and shield against each other. From an early age boys of good family practised in the castle courtyards, learning the manipulation of weapons, the arts of horsemanship, and were even taught to leap into the saddle in full armour.



Arms of Paulet.
Sable, three swords, their points meeting in base, argent, hilted or.

The fame of many great warriors began with success in the lists; for instance, the French patriot Bertrand du Guesclin. Skill and success in jousting is shown on the shield of the family of Knight: on a quarter, a lance in bend or; and, on that of Wiseman, sable, a chevron ermine, between three cronels (iron heads) of a tilting spear argent.

Closely akin to spearcraft was the cult of the sword. Whether in real warfare, or in the trial by battle in the lists, or in the mere sports

of the tournament, sword-play, in those days of cold steel, was reckoned of high account. Many well-known English families bear swords in various positions on their shields; for instance, the three swords, with pommels meeting in the centre, of Stapleton; with points meeting in the base, of Paulet; the three crossed swords of Ewart and of Norton. No better symbol of war, and the virtues which war brings to light, could be taken than the sword, so one frequently finds this weapon used as a crest. Usually, it is held in a hand, either bare or in armour; such being, for example, the device of the Camerons. The heraldic sword is depicted as straight in the blade, and pointed; probably because this was the type of sword in vogue with the Normans.

Of the many sports enjoyed in mediæval England, none was regarded with so kindly an eye by the Government as marksmanship. Our longbow shooting became famous throughout Europe; but the success was due to arduous practice. Close by every well-ordered village and town stood the archery butts, at which the youth and manhood of the place were encouraged to spend their leisure hours—to the sharp exclusion of football. The blue ribbon of archery was a victory at Finsbury butts, which stood just without old London's wall, and to these meetings repaired the doughtiest marksmen of all England.

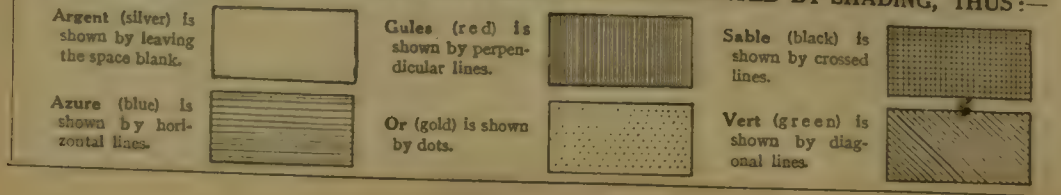
Since, however, the art of bowmanship belonged on the whole to the yeoman and peasant class, rather than to the knightly ranks, it is not quite so well represented in heraldry as some other sports. But, on the other hand, many of the greatest warriors of those iron days were archers of no mean order; there was William the Conqueror, for instance, whose war-bow no other man could bend; and it was not for naught that Richard Fitzgilbert, who laid the foundations of English overlordship in Ireland, was known as "Strongbow." So, no doubt, there are feats of archery to account for the three sheaves of arrows on the arms of the Biest family; and for the arms of Colyer, per pale embattled gules and azure, an arrow in bend or, barbed and flighted (*i.e.*, feathered) argent, point upwards.

In addition to one or two cases already incidentally mentioned, there are various instances in heraldry of some particular deed being rewarded by an addition to, or change in, the paternal coat of arms. Such a grant is called an augmentation. It is, in effect, much like the additional clasp to a modern service man's medal. An early example is the crowned heart, given to the good Sir James Douglas, for conveying the heart of King Robert Bruce to the Holy Land. Again, when Sir John Pelham captured King John of France at Poictiers, 1356, he was granted, gules, two demi-belts palewise in fess, their buckles in chief, argent—as an additional quartering to the arms of Pelham; and Richard de la Bere, having rescued the Black Prince from some imminent peril, was granted as an augmentation to his shield, a plume of ostrich feathers out of a ducal coronet. In the early sixteenth century the Earl of Surrey, in recognition of his victory over the invading Scots at Flodden, was permitted to charge on the silver bend of Howard "the royal shield of Scotland, having a demi-lion only, which is pierced through the mouth with an arrow."

Originally the shield of the Scottish border family of Ker of Cesfoord was gules, until, the chief having been slain in battle at Gambspath, James IV. granted that the shield should be vert, in memory of the greensward whereon he fell.

There are also interesting examples in much later days; for instance, Sir Cloudesley Shovel's crescent and fleur-de-lys, in memory of victories over the Turks and the French; the Duke of Marlborough's cross of St. George with the lilies of France; and the Duke of Wellington's famous inescutcheon bearing the Union Jack. These are all of well-known origin; but no doubt there are scores of charges on humbler shields whose heroic origin has been lost in the mists of centuries.

IN ALL LINE DRAWINGS, AS IN THE ILLUSTRATIONS THAT FORM THE HEADING TO THIS ARTICLE, THE COLOURS IN HERALDRY ARE REPRESENTED BY SHADING, THUS:—



A Bid for Fame

By ALAN BAIRD

I

TRESINGHAM was not an athlete; he did not shine at games; but he had a warm and liberal soul, and was full of spirited benevolence. Indeed, he was known at Northborough as the most generous fellow in the school.

Not that his generosity cost Tresingham very much. It was practised mainly at the expense of other people.

Tresingham was talented, for instance, in persuading new kids to overcome their natural shyness, and grub with him in tucker. When he had done himself and them in the largest possible fashion, he would be chagrined to discover that he had left his money in his study. His guests were proud—and properly—to repair the oversight. "Don't mention it," one or other, most polite, might urge of him. And Tresingham never did.

It was a hot afternoon in May, the beginning of the cricket season, when Tresingham and Jephcott found themselves disentangling a practice net in the seclusion of the pav. Neither, had he consulted his own wishes, would have declared for this amusement; but Millett, who captained the eleven, had a penchant for making Tresingham exert himself. The tangle was almost ravelled now, and Millett's presence was removed, when Tresingham straightened himself up, sighed heavily, glanced out into the sunshine, and sighed a second time.

"Anything the matter?" murmured Jephcott.

"Everything," sighed Tresingham.

"As for instance?"

Tresingham swung round and pointed a dramatic finger to the panelled walls of the pavilion. On these were emblazoned in gilt lettering the names of each Northborough eleven since 1865.

"See those," Tresingham declared. "All the fellows in the teams immortalised! Every one of those johnnies has left a name behind him for Northborough to remember! You and I will never have our names stuck up!"

"H'm," said Jephcott, doubtfully. He was younger than Tresingham, and quite meant to get into the team before he left. "Tresingham, who knows?"

"Never," repeated Tresingham. "We'll never be immortalised. Your name and mine, they'll be buried in oblivion."

"But you don't care for games?"

"No, but I'd like to leave behind me some footprints on the sands of time."

Jephcott looked up in alarm. He had no idea what Tresingham was quoting. "Eh?" he said.

"I can't make my life at Northborough sublime," said Tresingham; "so when I depart I'll leave no footprints on the sands——"

"Sands!" interpolated Jephcott. "Northborough isn't Blackpool!"

"But you're a goat," sighed Tresingham. "Other fellows who've been mugs at games have been jolly good at work, and they've left their names behind them on the honours boards. But you and I, Jephcott, we'll win no exhibitions—our names'll never be up there!"

"Who knows?" reiterated Jephcott.

"But it is sickening, isn't it, when you think of it," mourned Tresingham.

"Then you must do something to make Northborough remember you."

"And meanwhile," a sharp voice was interposing from the doorway, "meanwhile if that net isn't finished in three minutes I'll remember both of you." Millett had returned, impatiently.

The subject of his friend's anxiety did not recur to Jephcott until a few days later, when Tresingham, in a state of some excitement, sought him out one morning and drew him secretly aside.

"Jeph," he whispered, "Jeph, I've got it."

And unbuttoning his coat he produced the latest number of the *Northborough Magazine*. Under Jephcott's nose he extended a marked paragraph.

When Jephcott had read the paragraph, he snorted, and inquired where the joke came in. "I don't see what you're driving at," he growled. "It's only a list of the books added to the library."

"Yes, but what else?" demanded Tresingham, tapping the pages with his finger. "Look there—what's that? Read it out, man!"

"'*A library of Art and Architecture. Presented by T. V. Spiers,*'" Jephcott recited, blankly.

"Now come this way," said Tresingham, and led off to the library, where, having expelled two inoffensive kids, he closed the door and conducted his companion round the shelves.

"Jeph, see there!" he commanded. "If anybody gives an odd book or two, it's just jammed in and his name only appears in the mag. That's all, isn't it?"

"I suppose so," agreed Jephcott, thoroughly in the dark.

"But now look here!" Tresingham was indicating a row of uniform volumes. "Here's a whole shelf, given by one man. See what they've fastened underneath it?"

Jephcott was regarding a neat ivory label.

"Yes," he said, "I see; they've put his name up."

"'*Presented by O. F. Mellidew, Esq.,*'" read Tresingham. "And see, here's another row-full—with another name beneath. They always do it."

"Always do what?"

"Always put a man's name up if he gives a jolly set."

"Well?"

"Idiot!" spluttered Tresingham. "Can't you see? That man who's given the old books is immortalised at Northborough. His name's there for all time. He's left footprints on the sands——"

"Oh, hang the sands!" retorted Jephcott. "Get to it!"

"Jeph," said Tresingham, most solemnly, "I'm there. I'm going to present some volumes to the library——"

"You're what?"

"I mean to present some books to the library, and have my name up on an ivory plate. *Presented by Arthur Tresingham, Esquire.* Eh, what!"

Jephcott favoured Tresingham with a stare of blank astonishment. Then he whistled. Then he became suddenly quite serious.

"You can't!" he gasped.

"I will," said Tresingham.

"But consider, man, no fellow has the cheek to give books to the library, and have his name up, while he's at the school still. You've another two years yet. You daren't do it."

"There's no rule against it," argued Tresingham.

"They'd rag your life out."

"Who cares? They'd soon grow tired."

"But the cheek of it!"

"Oh, rot!" smiled Tresingham.

"I'd like to see you try it."

"You're going to. And, what's more," Tresingham said, sweetly, "what's more, Jeph, old man, you're going to help me choose them. We'll get leave-off this afternoon, and toddle down to Appleyard's. You're a good sort, Jeph."

If Jephcott had been longer at the school—he was comparatively a new boy though older than the general run—he might possibly have demurred at this invitation to the bookseller's. Since he was in the habit of receiving from his father considerably more pocket-money than was good for him, he might have regarded Tresingham's quick friendship in a dubious light. But Jephcott was a tyro—at that time.

Mr. Appleyard received them cordially, and displayed a sympathetic appreciation of Tresingham's desire for a set of swagger volumes for the library. He commented, however, that "swagger volumes ran expensive."

"Oh, that's all right," said Tresingham, magniloquently. "Besides, Appleyard, I'll tell you what I thought."

"Yes?" said the old bookseller.

"I thought you'd have some musty, out-of-date old set—rot that nobody would read, you know—that's going cheap. I don't care tuppence what they're all about—so long as they look decent."

"I see," said Mr. Appleyard, and dived into his parlour.

He reappeared some moments later dusting a portentous tome which he tendered Tresingham. "There," he said, "another seventeen volumes all like that—bound in claret calf—as good as new—'Pearle's Short History of Ethics'—most engrossing."

"Had them long?" asked Tresingham.

"Ten years or so," said Mr. Appleyard. "But good as new, sir; good as new. Not a page been cut, sir."

"How much?"

"To you," said Mr. Appleyard, "they're

forty-seven shillings. Published at six guineas —that's a fact."

"Right," cried Tresingham. "You put them down to me."

Up went the old fellow's hands, while he protested that he meant spot cash; that he could not part with them on any other terms.

"But," persisted Tresingham, "I've only six and twopence on me."

"Then, sir, the books must wait. I'm sorry —it's a pity—it's a chance you'll never meet again."

That Tresingham had foreseen some such contingency as this is not beyond the bounds of possibility. That his companion had received that morning a money order from home is a factor which may have influenced him to disclose his project. At all events, he turned to Jephcott now in his dilemma. His face was very rueful.

"Sickening, isn't it, old man?" he mourned. "I was sure that Appleyard would trust me. Whatever can I do?"

The sunshine faded from the little shop, and Jephcott felt a horrid stab of apprehension. The old bookseller was regarding both benignly.

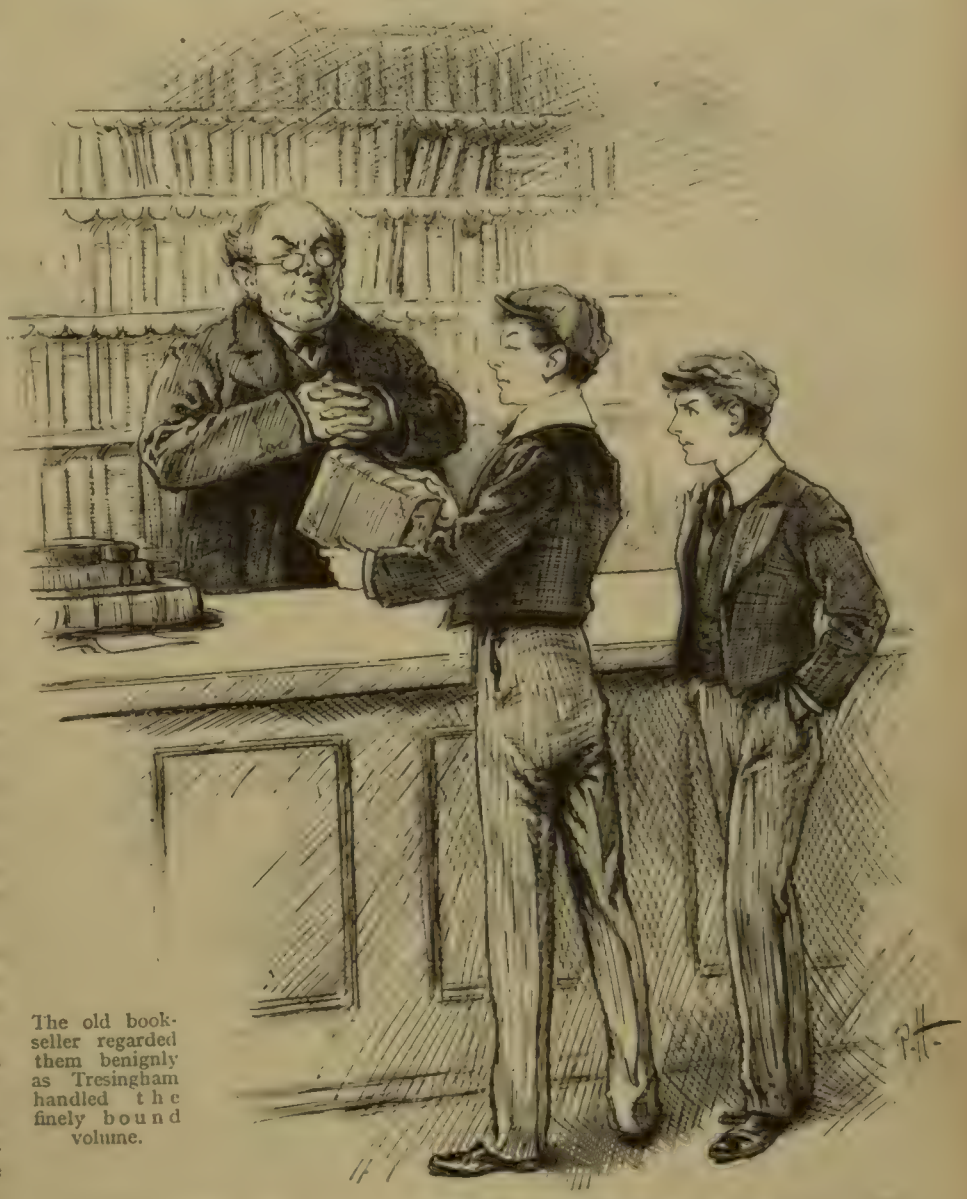
"Perhaps, Mr. Tresingham," he began, "your friend——"

"I hate asking him," Tresingham broke in. "You'd much better give me tick."

"Can't be done," said Mr. Appleyard.

Jephcott was turning to the door, when the bookseller's smooth tones recalled him. "Well, we'll say forty-five shillings then," he heard him murmuring. And, next, Tresingham was grabbing at his arm.

"Look here, Jeph. Lend me the money till



The old bookseller regarded them benignly as Tresingham handled the finely bound volume.

Tuesday morning, will you? You've got an order, haven't you?"

"Sort of," stammered Jephcott, feebly.

"Good man! Old Appleyard can easily change it. Change for a three-pound money order, please, Appleyard."

"Forty-five—and five's fifty—and ten's three pound—here you are, sir," assented Mr. Appleyard. "And the volumes, they'll be up at Northborough to-morrow morning, Mr. Tresingham."

But it was not until the High Street lay behind them that Jephcott suddenly realised that he had parted with more money than he need. For Tresingham, while he owed him forty-five shillings, had six-and-twopence still. There seemed a screw loose somewhere.

"I say," he was beginning, when his companion wheeled him down a narrow side street.

"Half a mo, Jeph—there's a chap who makes those ivory labels here."

"You don't intend——"

"To go the lot? You bet I do. Old man, I mean to leave my footprints."

"But, Tresingham? You said Tuesday morning, didn't you?"

"Eh?" said Tresingham, abstractedly.

"Tuesday morning, you said?"

"Tuesday morning! What about it?"

"For my forty-five bob, you know."

"Wait here," said Tresingham, "while I order what I want."

When the benefactor emerged again he was so full of the certain immortality before him that Jephcott got no chance to edge a word in anywhere. So he listened rather wearily while Tresingham dilated on the generation after generation which would come to Northborough and stand before his library shelf in mute appraise. "When you and I are dust, old man," he expatiated comfortably—"when you and I are dust. Can't you see them?"

"How can I?" snorted Jephcott, very sore with his share in the transaction. "How can I, if they're not born yet?"

"You've no imagination," murmured Tresingham.

"But I'd a money order."

This reminder was waved airily aside. "Can't you see them, Jeph? Arthur Tresingham"—he rolled the syllables on his tongue—"Arthur Tresingham—they'll repeat the name to one another, and wonder who I was. When you and I are dust, old man."

"You'll be dust jolly quick if you show the books to Millett," snorted Jephcott.

But Tresingham's gigantic self-assurance proved equal even to this undertaking. His heart, in fact, was scarcely pulsing beyond normal when a few days later he appeared in Millett's study under a burden of tremendous tomes. Millett looked up sharply.

"What have you been prigging now?" he snapped.

Tresingham smiled modestly. "You're librarian, Millett," he remarked, "so I've brought these books. They're eighteen volumes of a history of ethics. I want to give them to the library."

"Some people," scowled Millett, "are singularly impertinent."

"But, seriously, Millett. I've bought them, please—on purpose."

"Really! I've never heard——"

"Of a chap at the school making presents to the library," Tresingham dashed in. "But, Millett, there's no rule against it."

"No," mused Millett, "I suppose not. I remember none." For Millett, as Tresingham well knew, prided himself on his impartiality; as cricket captain, he would explain, he had to think judicially.

"Very well, then, Millett, I can give them, can't I? If you don't mind, please."

"But why?"

Tresingham's voice dropped; he eyed the other earnestly. "I think sometimes," he murmured, "that I may have to leave suddenly, you know. Millett, it's a sort of premonition. And I want to do something for Northborough before I go. That's why, Millett."

"Oh!" said Millett, drily. "Pop along!"

But Tresingham was hesitating. He produced a small tablet of the whitest ivory, and put it down beside the books.

"I thought, Millett, if you didn't mind," he ventured, "we could fix this—er—label underneath them. It's got my name on, Millett."

When Millett understood what Tresingham required, and read the legend in neat black lettering—*Presented by Arthur Tresingham, Esquire*—his amusement was immoderate. But presently his brows grew ominous.

"Of all the cheek!" he shouted.

"They're a whole shelf-full," explained Tresingham, standing his ground stoutly. "And Spiers has got his name under the row he gave."

"Spiers left years ago," frowned Millett.

"And so have lots of other givers."

"They weren't kids at the school," said Millett.

"But that's beside the point," said Tresingham, whose pleasure was an argument.

"Considered impartially, it's quite beside the point. Everybody agrees that you mustn't look a gift-horse in the mouth, and what we have to consider here is not the standing of the giver, but the value of his gift. And the spirit, too, that prompts the gift. If my gift's a good one, and well meant, Millett, what difference does it make that I'm a boy here? I deserve a record of it as much as anyone else. It's only snobbery to argue otherwise."

"Oh," said Millett, "is it?"

"In fact," Tresingham went on, "a fellow who gives something he can very ill afford deserves the record more, if you view it in the true light; more, I say, than the grown-up joker with a lot of tin. Comparatively, you see, the boy's gift is ten times more valuable. It means more, Millett."

"I suppose it does," mused Millett. "A sort of widow's mite."

"Exactly," said Tresingham; "you've got it right away. It wouldn't be fair then, would it, to commemorate Spiers' books and the other fellows' and put up mine without a single word. You'd never be a party to any favouritism, Millett."

Millett leaned back in his chair, toying with an incipient moustache. As Tresingham had put the case he was inclining to the opinion that he must either refuse the books or accept the label with them. There was a good deal to be said, he was persuaded, for Tresingham's point of view. He determined finally to consult Tollifer and Roach; and with this conclusion Tresingham was fain to rest content.

If Millett was a trifle solid, Tollifer and Roach had a healthy appetite for fun, to which Northborough has always attributed the acceptance of the gift. For sure enough Tresingham's proud books were duly deposited upon a library shelf, and beneath them was affixed the title of their generous benefactor. The school flocked in relays to visit them, and for ten days or so the life of Tresingham became a melancholy matter. Few benevolent benefactors have been so mercilessly ragged.

But he bore it all unflinchingly, comforted in the assurance that the game was worth the candle—that temporary tribulation was all too cheap a price for the perpetual memory he had at last established. "They may rag me now," he told his faithful Jephcott, "but their grandchildren will hold my name in reverence. Yes, it's cheap, Jeph."

"What's cheap?" answered Jephcott.

"Old man, the price I'm paying."

"Then I wish you'd add to it."

"How?" asked Tresingham, for once taken off his guard.

"By paying my tin back. I want it badly."

The philanthropist became the picture of concern. "My dear man," he exclaimed. "My dear, dear man! I'd clean forgotten all about it. By Jove, I am ashamed!"

"That's all right," said Jephcott. "Fork it out!"

"But I can't," said Tresingham.

"You promised it."

"I know I did. But my money never came. I'll write again."

"You will?"

"At once," said Tresingham.

Although this promise was faithfully performed, it brought, unhappily, no satisfaction to poor Jephcott. It is quite possible that Tresingham himself had been sanguine of no other result. So week followed week, and hope deferred accumulated, which (following all proper precedent) made the heart (of Jephcott) grow extremely sick. He began to think much less of Tresingham, and much more of his money order. An estrangement grew.

And thus, while Tresingham, his ragging cheerfully lived down, pursued his philanthropic way, the flicker of animosity in the bosom of his erstwhile friend was kindled into flame. Jephcott blew upon the flame, and nursed it.

Until one day, three weeks before the end of term, he slipped down quietly into the town, and by stealth he visited a certain small shop in an alley. He returned all smiles to Northborough.

Thereafter he became immediately all smiles as well with Tresingham. And this alone was needed to fill the cup of happiness of that philanthropist.

"Jeph," he murmured, cheerfully, "I always knew you were a ripper. Some day I'll pay you—certain."

"I'm sure you will," smiled Jephcott.

II

At this period (as old boys will recall), Northborough was ruled by the Rev. Henry Wilkins, a genial soul, with a real sense of proportion and a lively touch of humour.

And it happened on a languorous afternoon in the last week of that term that the Reverend Henry found an opportunity, when the school was busily engaged at cricket, to examine certain small repairs which had been completed that same morning in the flooring of

Big Hall. In drowsy and contemplative mood he proceeded on his mission.

In Big Hall, as will be well remembered, are hung the portraits of those pious founders, those translated and deceased head masters, and all those sundry other cognate dignitaries who may from age to age have played their parts beneficent in the history of Northborough. Mementoes of a mighty past, the paintings in their heavy frames gaze down with all encouragement upon a modern race of minnows. The Reverend Henry was pleased at all times to contemplate these portraits.

This afternoon the fancy took him to recline himself, and dreamily regard them. He began to wonder possibly in what precise spot in their midst his own presentment would one day be suspended. He hoped—who knows?—that it would do him justice. He speculated—and why not?—upon the attitude in which he should be painted.

In such gratifying reverie, his gaze was roving lightly across the oldest of the portraits, which perpetuates the features of Archdeacon Mogle, who in 1849 established the Mogle Exhibition to University College, Oxford. When suddenly Mr. Wilkins's figure straightened, the dreamy look was blotted from his eyes; he rose, and stared intently at the picture.

It was not indeed the generous nasal organ of the venerable archdeacon that had riveted his interest. It was rather an inconspicuous bar of white which ran across the bottom of the frame. Mr. Wilkins had no recollection of seeing it before.

He mounted on a form beneath the picture, to scrutinise this remarkable phenomenon. The slip of white resolved itself into an ivory tablet.

But the tablet itself was less astonishing than the inscription that it bore. When the Reverend Henry had perused this, he gasped; then rubbed his eyes, and regarded it again. For this is what he read:—

"*Presented by Arthur Tresingham, Esquire.*"

Presented by Arthur Tresingham, Esquire—this portrait of the venerable archdeacon, who had braved, as one may say, for fifty years, the battle and the breeze of Northborough! Presented by Arthur Tresingham, Esquire! The Reverend Henry pinched himself; he wondered if he dreamed.

In burning indignation he turned to the adjoining portrait. It also—if the ivory tablet that it bore might be believed—had been presented by Arthur Tresingham, Esquire!

With quick prevision of the worst he examined one and all. Each dignitary bore an ivory tablet; each had been presented by the most benevolent Tresingham.

The Reverend Henry rushed out to the meadows, whence instantly he returned with Millett, with Tollifer and Roach, and with other prefects snatched ruthlessly from healthful sport. He bade them regard the outrage, and explain it. But no explanation was forthcoming.

"Sir, shall we take the labels off?" asked Millett.

"No!" The tones were grim. "Please leave them there."

So it came about that the whole of Northborough was presently enabled to regard, with mingled feelings, this latest instance of the generosity of Tresingham. Then Northborough went for that philanthropist. But he escaped them.

As a matter of fact he had slipped from the frying-pan into the fire, being parlously engaged with the Rev. Henry Wilkins, who was fain, however, to accept at last the trembling creature's word that he had no hand in the occurrence. "Sir, I know nothing of it," he was pleading. "Nothing!"

"Then you had better know something by to-morrow, Tresingham," the Reverend Henry assured him with due emphasis. "You had very much better, Tresingham, Now go."

It was obvious that Tresingham would immediately seek Jephcott, to lead him to the quietest corner in the school. He begged Jephcott to find him some way out.

Jephcott was genial and sympathetic.

"What can *I* do?" he deplored.

"But the old man's going to serve it hot for me unless I discover by to-morrow," Tresingham had begun, when something in the other's face brought sudden light. The dawn of comprehension broke lucent in his mind. "Jephcott, you did it!" he exclaimed. "You did it!"

"I?" said Jephcott, mildly. "I?"

"You beast! I know you did."

"Well, in that case," Jephcott murmured, "I pass the assumption by. But, Tresingham, there's one thing you should know."

"What is it?"

"You can't possibly deny that you presented all the portraits of those dear old persons. Now, can you?"

Tresingham was raving now, beside himself. "Insensate idiot!" he ejaculated. "Funny, funny dog!"

"But you did give them, didn't you?" asked Jephcott, earnestly.

"Oh, stow it!"

"But you gave those library books."

"I know I did."

"Then you gave the portraits too."

"I didn't!"

"Tresingham, you did. I'll prove it. You're good at logic, aren't you?"

Tresingham growled something inarticulate.

"You see, Tres, if you presented the library books you certainly made a present of the pictures. The tablet under the books is true?"

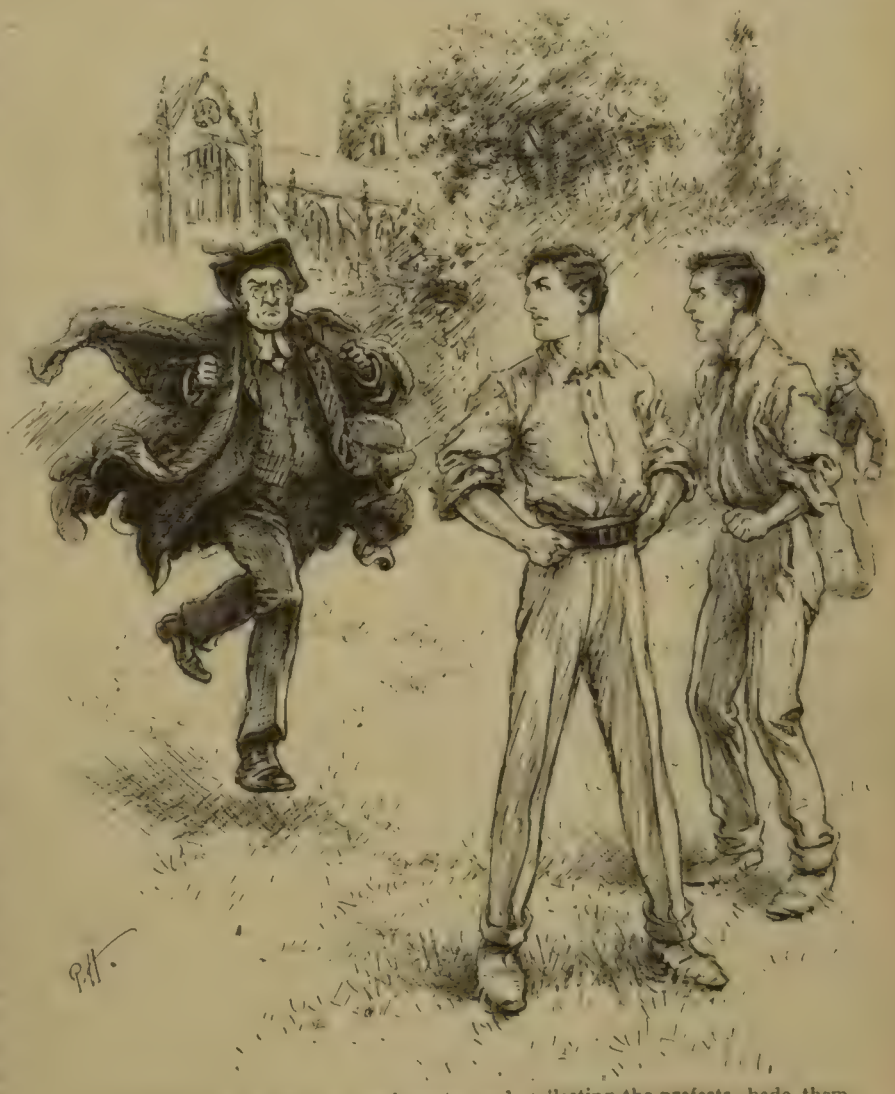
"Of course it is."

"Then so are the tablets under the pictures. You gave the pious founders just as actually as you presented the ethics——"

"But I bought the beastly books!" cried Tresingham.

"Oh, no, you didn't. I did."

Tresingham clutched now at the other's meaning. Jephcott went on suavely, and drove his argument home. "You put that view before the Head, old man—and get out of it as best you can."



Into the meadows rushed the head master and, collecting the prefects, bade them regard the outrage and explain it.

Very despondently, the benefactor was departing, when he heard his name recalled.

"Look here," Jephcott added, kindly, "I'll tell you what to do. Explain to the old man that you've got a monomania for making presentations, that you're cracked on it, and that you actually imagine the founders are your gift. Throw yourself on his mercy, Tresingham. He won't whack you. He'll wrap you up and send you to a rest cure, or an asylum, or something of that sort. You'll be happy there."

"Fiend!" screamed Tresingham. "Insensate fiend!" He fled swiftly, to hide from Northborough's ire.

But after chapel that same evening Jephcott presented himself in the sanctum of the Reverend Henry with an air of diffident expectancy. He had soon unfolded the whole story, omitting

only to explain that Tresingham had forgotten to repay him. It is to be feared, in truth, that the ingenious youth left behind him the impression that the debt had been discharged. But he took, in exchange, another impression away. This was the tingle (on both hands) of a supple, biting cane.

"But the game," mused Jephcott, as he blew on them and recalled a phrase of Tresingham's, "the game was jolly well worth the candle."

"Jephcott," observed the Reverend Henry, recalling him, "you will tell nobody that you have been to me."

Reclining in his solitude and saddlebag, Mr. Wilkins, who, be it remembered, had a close appreciation of the humorous, began presently to smile. The smile lingered, till it rippled into pleasant little puckers round his mouth. He was stifling it next morning, when he bade the school and staff assemble in Big Hall.

"Place a chair for Tresingham," he commanded, when everyone was there.

"A chair, sir!" stammered Millett. "A chair for Tresingham!"

"A chair!" the Head reiterated. "And put it here—where all of us can see him."

Crimson with confusion, the benefactor took his place, and the Reverend Henry, after a long pause, in which he scrutinised the company, began slowly to address them. His face was very grave.

"Boys," he said, with a slight gesture to the portraits on the walls, "we are assembled to express some public recognition of the remarkable generosity and public spirit of one who is clearly not the least among us. It is palpable to all of you that I refer to Arthur Tresingham."

He paused, with a steady gaze at the occupant of the chair. Northborough began to nudge itself.

"For three years now," the level tones resumed, "we have been honoured by the presence of Arthur Tresingham, Esquire, in our midst. Tresingham, I think it is three years?"

"Yes, sir," squeaked Tresingham, in an awesome silence.

"Thank you, Tresingham. For three years, then, we have entertained, as I may say, an angel unawares; for few of us, I fancy, have hitherto suspected what latent excellence and virtue have been concealed beneath that—er—somewhat commonplace exterior. Arthur Tresingham, indeed, is a violet who has blushed unseen."

The Reverend Henry paused again; to emphasise, perhaps, that whatever the violet's record in the past, its blushes to-day could be scarcely termed invisible.

"In the distinctive sphere, indeed, for which Northborough and kindred institutions have been founded, it may be said without exaggeration that Arthur Tresingham has sought no vulgar fame. His light has not shone on the arduous heights of scholarship. His feats have not inspired in the tourney of athletics. He has worn no laurels such as smaller minds may seek. His is a soul sublime above them."

There was a low hum of applause, immediately subdued. The Head went on, serenely:—

"But I would beg you, boys, to regard well Arthur Tresingham, Esquire. For you have in him a benefactor whose memory is sweet. We shall recall, most of us, that munificent donation to our library which has signalised his name, the more worthy since no doubt it represents a sum of self-sacrifice few of us could emulate. While *we* have been dissipating our substance in the tuck-shop, Arthur Tresingham has sedulously hoarded his small means; he has denied himself; content to subsist on the bare necessities of our Northborough tables that he may provide us with eighteen volumes of the 'History of Ethics.' When I consider the anxiety which you have evinced each one of you to borrow and peruse those illuminating volumes, when I remember, too, the profit with which you have assimilated their contents, I find no words to express the debt which Northborough owes to Arthur Tresingham—Esquire."

Tresingham was wishing now that the floor would open up and swallow him. A shrill guffaw of delight rose from the vicinity of Jephcott. The Reverend Henry regarded him austerely, and proceeded:—

"Behold, boys, these portraits that surround us of the pious benefactors and dignitaries of Northborough. I will confess that hitherto I have believed with each of you that these likenesses have been given to the school—some in a past growing rapidly remote—by the friends or relatives of the gentlemen portrayed. That excellent presentment, for example, of the venerable archdeacon, to whom a host of Mogle Exhibitioners have owed so much, was bequeathed to us, I had most fondly thought, by that reverend man himself on his decease. Boys, we have been living in a paradise of fantasy."

The Head cleared his throat. Tresingham was looking very limp.

"We have been mistaken, boys, I must repeat; and most churlishly have been withholding the credit for these benefactions from the quarter where we owe it. We have not given honour where honour is due. So this morning we are met to acknowledge our mistake, to make what reparation we are able, and I, as the mouthpiece of yourselves, am here to thank the real and generous donor of these time-honoured memorials. Need I tell you that his name is Arthur Tresingham? Scarcely, since the evidence of your own eyes will have so assured you. Tresingham—we thank you."

"But it is Horace," the Reverend Henry was concluding, "who has remarked—as the Sixth Form will immediately recall—in that beautiful Book Three of his, that he has reared for himself a monument more durable than brass, more lofty than the princely structure of the pyramids; the biting rain, he declares, can never overthrow it, nor lapse of countless years, nor flight of time. *Non omnis moriar*, he goes on—but the lines—ahem—will be conversant to you all. You, Millett, perhaps, will finish the quotation."

Millett, scrambling to his feet, stood speechless.

"Well, never mind. For Arthur Tresingham, Esquire, has risen to a nobler height than Horace, and if the Roman poet needs no memorial of brass—or even—ahem—ivory—to mark his fame and guard his cherished name, much less, we shall agree, does Arthur Tresingham, Esquire, require any such paltry and adventitious aids to secure his immortality at Northborough. I ask you, boys, is anything required to perpetuate the memory here of Arthur Tresingham, Esquire?"

"Your silence," smiled the Reverend Henry, "convinces me. Tollifer!"

The captain of the school stepped out.

"When you are dismissed you will see that those tablets are removed from the frames."

"Yes, sir," replied Tollifer, sedately.

"Millett!"

"Yes, sir."

"You will proceed to the library at once, and from the shelf on which that engrossing history of ethics is reposing you will displace the little label which we insult Arthur Tresingham, Esquire, by retaining. Destroy it, Millett."

"Yes, sir," and Millett departed with alacrity.

"You may go, boys," smiled the Reverend Henry.

The Thin One (taking a before-breakfast stroll): "Keen on grub as ever, Tubby! Out looking for the early worm, I suppose?"
The Fat One: "Just so, old chap; but I didn't expect to *meet* it!"

At that moment Ogilvie, seizing him by the shoulders, pushed with all his force, and Jack Blair went headlong into the sea.

THE FLOATING CAISSON

An Adventure at Sea

By THOMPSON CROSS

Illustrated by John de Walton

I

"YE couple o' boiled neeps!" Captain Donaldson said, with withering contempt in his voice. "I'd stop the old paddle-flapper an' send ye home if we were within fifty miles o' Glesca!"

The two men who had just climbed perilously over the heaving bulwarks from the little boat looked at each other half sheepishly and at Captain Donaldson half defiantly. They were both drenched and dripping with sea-water; both big, broad-shouldered, hard-bitten men, with the black eyes and fine features of the people whose home is in the Western Highlands of Scotland.

One of them spoke sourly.

"She wass not to stay any longer on that old piece of iron, whatever," he said in his groping Gaelic English. "Ta storm is coming fast; ta sea gets rougher every minute. The rope may break if ta storm is pad, and where should Macalister an' me pe then, floating apout the sea on a great flat-iron? It is a position that no shentleman would be after desiring. So we have come apoard again."

Captain Donaldson, master of the tug-boat, *Prince Charlie*, registered at the port of Glasgow as 300 tons burden, bound from the Clyde to Trondhjem with a dock caisson in tow, turned away.

"Shentlemen," he said, with a groan, "Heaven help a puir Scot delivered into the hands of a pack o' snivellin' Hieland sea-babbies!"

Jack Blair grinned faintly as he looked away from the captain, shading his eyes with one hand and clinging to the bulwarks with the other, as the little broad-beamed steamer tumbled with a reeking funnel and slopping decks into the trough of the sea.

He stood watching the great flat piece of unwieldiness that wallowed in the breaking seas astern. He had an idea that if he had been either of the two men who had crouched inside the tarpaulin hutch on that sea-swept expanse of floating steel, he would have much preferred the comparative comfort and safety of the *Prince Charlie*, with the sky like a great grey piece of torn and shredded canvas, and the wind veering round to the north-west, which is the store-cupboard for all the tumultuous storms that afflict the Irish Sea in the autumn equinox. But then, Jack Blair had been leaning over a polished mahogany desk in the head office of the Scottish Banking Company but two days before, his head bemused with figures and his body warmed by a patent hot-air radiator. The change from that to the wet, coal-piled decks of the little tug, flapping northwards off the west coast of Scotland, dragging behind her the air-filled mass of metal which was destined to be one of the great gates of the harbour dock at Trondhjem, was abrupt enough.

It was he who had suggested the trip to Captain Donaldson, his mother's brother. He had foregone all his summer holidays so that he might snatch a clear month. At first, the weather-beaten old skipper, who for the past ten years had convoyed across the four seas all manner of strange craft—dock-caissons, dredgers, gaunt-built river boats, and sturdy, thick-haunched tugs—looked upon the proposal but dourly. But gradually he had thawed.

And so Jack Blair, clerk in the Scottish Banking Company, stood in his glistening oilies in the bucking stern of the *Prince Charlie* tug, watching the dripping hawsers tighten and slacken as now the tug, and now the great floating thing behind her, rose and fell and wallowed in the thickening murk.

"Don't blame 'em," Captain Donaldson said, as the two men moved forward. "But it doesn't do to let 'em ken that. The glass is dropping like a plumb-line. There'll be a snorer up out o' the Nor'-West within an hour. There's some ghastly currents round these parts, too—little sucking whirligigs o' water that nobody kens about. And they'd play shuttlecock with that big, helpless limmer o' iron. That's what I'm afraid of. If the hawsers broke——"

He left off abruptly.

"S'pose they broke?" Jack Blair said.

Captain Donaldson stared with narrowed eyes at the straining hawsers for a full minute before replying.

"Then," he said, with a short laugh, "there'd be a piece o' metal worth about £15,000 floating about the seas, twenty times more dangerous than an iceberg. An' the Harbour Trust at Trondhjem would have to sit an' whustle for their dock gate."

He turned and walked without another word to the little bridge where Mr. McIndoe, the mate, stood at the wheel.

Jack Blair gazed thoughtfully at the hawsers. Now and then a big green wave poured over the bulwarks and creamed along the deck as deep as the top of his sea-boots. Every moment, it seemed, the sea grew lumpier, and the lash of the wind stung more keenly. The racing paddles thrilled and jarred like the shock of a galvanic battery as the little craft lifted on the crests of the big waves. The black smoke-stack rocked and swung against the grey sky like a drunken thing, belching a thick ribbon of smoke that streamed and widened far behind. The horizon was filmed with a spray-mist, and, as he gazed with straining eyes, the great caisson behind dropped from sight in the froth of the seas and then rose high against the skies, black and shining, with the waves breaking whitely about it.

"They'll not hold!" Jack Blair said aloud, as the hawsers tightened with a jar that seemed to pluck the *Prince Charlie* backwards.

Really, it was rather presumptuous of Jack Blair to say a thing like that even to himself. For, except that he usually spent his holidays pottering about the Clyde and the Western Islands in a ten-ton auxiliary-motor yacht, and the fact that he had won the prize the previous year for the long swim across from Dunoon to Gourock, a distance of four or five miles, he had no qualification to speak on matters nautical.

Yet, strangely enough, his words came true in the very second that he spoke.

Behind, the mass of floating metal seemed to lift itself bodily out of the water and then dip again, as a diving whale dips. Simultaneously the *Prince Charlie* climbed dizzily skywards and swept down into the trough again. A noise like the single crack of a Maxim gun sounded, and over the blunt stern of the tug a striking snake seemed to leap. Jack Blair felt the wind of it as he jumped aside instinctively, so near it came that piece of the snapped hawser which would have decapitated him had it struck him. He heard the twang of it above as a lurch flung him on all fours for a moment, and a green welter of water swept him breathless against the bulwarks.

He picked himself up slowly. Captain Donaldson had dropped bodily from the bridge, and was roaring orders with a white, stern face to the three seamen who followed at his heels. The beat of the paddles slackened. The single steel rope by which the caisson remained fastened to the *Prince Charlie* vibrated and thrilled.

"Look-out!" one of the sailors called in a shrill voice, ducking swiftly.

The remaining hawser, thick as a man's arm as it was, triple-forged and Lloyd's-tested, parted like sewing thread, three yards from its coupling in the stern hawse-holes of the tug. The fragment that remained leapt aboard, striking the man who had called out the warning. He went down to the wet deck and lay there groaning, with his head in his hands.

"Gone, by jingo!" Captain Donaldson said, a little hoarsely.

He stood staring over the tumbling waste of water to where the caisson rose and dipped and heaved among the breaking seas.

"I told 'em I'd want two tugs at this time o' the year, but they wouldn't listen," he said. "And now—hallo!"

The captain's last word was feeble with surprise, and a little dull flush of colour crept over the paling bronze of his face. He was staring like a hopelessly mystified man in the direction of the caisson. As Jack Blair followed his gaze a big wave lifted the great piece of shining iron so that he saw every detail of it.

There was a man upon it, making signals with a white handkerchief. There was no mistake about it. He stood by the tarpaulin hutch, which had been put up for the shelter of the sailors who had been in charge of the caisson, waving frenziedly. Blair saw that he was bare-headed and wore a fawn overcoat.

"My aunt!" he said, slowly. "Who's that?"

He turned to see the two Highland men who had been in charge of the caisson standing behind the captain and himself, staring with open mouths and terrified eyes. The man who had been struck by the snapped hawser had been helped down into the cabin.

"Gootness!" one of them gasped. "But that man wass not there when Macalister and me were there."

Captain Donaldson recovered himself.

"He's there now," he said, grimly, "and there he'll stay—if he's lucky."

"You'll send a boat, won't you?" Jack Blair said, thrilling a little. "He must have stowed himself away in one of the man-holes—the mad beggar!"

"As well try to land a boat on Skerryvore in a westerly gale as try to land on yon thing in this sea," Captain Donaldson said, curtly. "The boat 'ud be smashed to splinters. Like trying to halter a mad horse, it 'ud be. The thing would very likely jump on top o' you."

II

THE caisson dipped beneath a sea that swept it clean beneath a smothering surge. Jack Blair gave an involuntary cry. For a moment, he thought the man, whoever he was and however he had got upon the caisson, had been swept away. Then he saw that he still remained, clinging to the tarpaulin hutch and flapping his sodden handkerchief feebly. Something in the sight fired Jack Blair's blood.

"You ought to send a boat for him," he said, flushing slightly. "It's—it's murder, pretty well, if you don't."

For a moment Captain Donaldson glanced at him fiercely. Then he stared again at the drenched figure that clung to the hutch on the caisson, still waving.

"It would be murder if I did," he said, biting his lip. "Whoever the gomeral is, he's cut his own meat an' must eat it. We'll can only beat about till the sea goes down, an' keep yon thing in sight all the time. Then we'll lay another hawser on her and take that lunatic off. I'm doubtin' whether any o' the men'll go in the boat in a sea like this. It's a job for volunteers. I'd no' be forcing any man to a thing like that. Na, na, the fool'll hae to stick fast till the sea goes down."

"He's gone!" Jack Blair cried.

Already the caisson had drifted to the starboard of the *Prince Charlie*, and the distance between them had increased to three hundred yards. As Jack Blair had gazed, the great thing had lurched like a vicious animal, the man upon it had fallen his length, and, simultaneously, a green wall of water had poured, splashing and breaking upon it.

Jack Blair turned his face away with a feeling of sickness. The captain, watching with keen eyes, made a noise in his throat.

"He's no' gone!" he said. "He's a fly on a ceilin' for sticking! There goes his hanky again!"

He swung round, with his blue eyes blazing, to the group of seamen who stood behind him, watching the figure on the caisson with bewildered faces.

"Volunteers for a boat!" he roared. "To pull out to yon thing and take yon chap off it. Who says?"

"I'm going," Jack Blair said, quite simply. "I bet I beat anyone here at swimming, and I think it may come to that. If you'll put a rope in the boat, sir, it can stand off while I go overboard to the caisson and take the beggar off."

He flushed a little as Captain Donaldson swung round on him and the men looked at him curiously. Perhaps his words had sounded a little boastful, though he had not meant them to be so.

There was a momentary silence, save for the liquid crash of a wave as it broke aboard and the clank of steel down in the engine-room.

"I'll take charge, sir," said Mr. McIndoe, the mate, shortly.

Three of the men volunteered. Mr. McIndoe chose Campbell and Macalister, the two Highland men who had been in charge of the caisson.

For a moment it seemed as though Captain Donaldson would have forbidden Blair to go in the boat. But as the boat in the starboard davits dropped slowly, and Blair leapt into it, he turned away with a faint, grim smile. It pleased Captain Donaldson to think that his sister's son, quill-driving landsman that he was, had all that pluck in him.

"Off!" Mr. McIndoe roared.

A great wave slapped up and licked down the boat. Campbell and Macalister flung off the davit-hooks, and the *Prince Charlie* soared skywards on the crest of a wave, high above them, her paddles flying through thin air, her black undersides dripping and gleaming wetly. The four oars flashed swiftly in the water, and the boat slid dizzily down the wall of a great slate-coloured wave.

Of the fight with those tumultuous seas that followed, Jack Blair remembered very little beyond the strain of the leaping oar at his wrists, the hot perspiration of his body, and the icy sting of the whipping spray, the swing of the grey sky above his head one moment as the boat ran down into the trough, and the ugly look of the leaden water the next as they climbed up the opposite slope. Once a wave curled over into the boat, and Mr. McIndoe bailed furiously with the can for a minute. Behind, the little tug fouled the sky with smoke as she rolled in the heavy seas. Blair

noticed, though only subconsciously, that a little wet mist blurred the details of her.

"Belay there!" Mr. McIndoe roared.

Jack Blair looked round for the first time Startlingly big, the great flat caisson loomed in the welter of water twenty yards on their lee. So near were they that Blair could hear the wet slap of the water as it spouted in fountains round her, and the voice of the man upon it, all cracked and broken with excitement and fear. He clung to the pole of the tarpaulin hutch, still waving his handkerchief mechanically. Blair noticed that he was quite a young man.

"See that!" Mr. McIndoe said. "We'll be matchwood if we go a foot nearer."

The great metal thing seemed to leap bodily from the water at them, and crashed down with a splash that drenched them icily.

"Back-water!" Mr. McIndoe said, in a startled voice.

Macalister and Campbell bent back with a grunt.

"There pe a devil in that thing," Macalister said, wiping the spray from his beard.

Jack Blair felt his skin tingle.

"Give us the rope, Mr. McIndoe," he said. "I'll be aboard the thing in no time. Then I'll tie it round the two of us and you can haul us back. He'll have to come, if you pull hard enough."

Mr. McIndoe screwed up his mouth.

"Umph!" he said.

"Give it me," Jack Blair said, feverishly, bending down and taking the rope for himself. "The next wave may send the poor beggar into the waves."

"Ye'll witness," Mr. McIndoe said, slowly, "that I've no given you permission——"

"Tie the rope round me," Jack Blair said, impatiently.

"There is Hieland plood in you, sure!" Campbell said, admiringly, knotting the rope.

Jack Blair was kicking off his heavy sea boots and divesting himself of his oilies. The man on the floating caisson was calling whimperingly.

"I'm going," Jack Blair said. "Give me plenty of rope."

He paused for a moment, and then dived.

The chill of the grey water seemed to strike at his heart for a moment. The living strength of the waves mocked at all his claims to be a champion swimmer. The boat sank into the trough out of sight, and for the space of several seconds he felt appallingly alone. Once he thought he heard a cry from the boat, but the wet hiss of the water drowned it.

He set his teeth and fought doggedly. Lifted high, he seemed to overhang the shining flatness of the caisson. Swung low, it appeared to hang over him like a projectile flung from some gigantic hand.

It came lurching towards him, ugly, ungraceful, threatening, pouring cascades of white and green water. It seemed to fling its whole monstrous weight at him. He could see the twenty-foot ladder that ran up the side of it, and, as the great thing lunged at him, he clutched one of the rungs with a last desperate instinct.

He was lifted high, hanging by both hands, breathless with the icy water that poured over his head. As he swung there in mid-air, he began to climb the slender, swaying ladder, clinging like a monkey with hands and feet.

He reached the rim of the flat, floating thing, with the breath buffeted from his body, and his brain singing like a dynamo.

He turned to the boat, ignoring the man who clung to the rough hutch, staring at him with wild eyes.

"Done it!" he called, a little hoarsely. "Slack the rope——"

The boat seemed to have dwindled distantly and shrunk small. A grey smoke seemed to envelop it also. He could see Mr. McIndoe dimly, making signs and shouting. A wall of mist had crept suddenly around everything.

"He pulled at the rope with a swift, sick feeling of apprehension. It came loosely at his tug.

"Broken!" Jack Blair said, quite calmly.

He lay flat on the cold metal of the caisson as a big sea swept over it. Then, on all fours, he crept over to the tarpaulin hutch where the man stood.

"They've gone!" the man said, with a sob, staring at him.

He turned again and saw that the mist had crept like a gauze curtain over everything. He realised that it was raining more furiously than he had ever known it rain before. The boat was blotted out behind a slanting curtain of rain that was like the shading of a pen-and-ink drawing.

"Gone!" Jack Blair said, with an unsteady laugh. "And now there are two of us on this jolly thing instead of one!"

III

THE man had covered his face with his hands. Jack Blair saw that he was trembling and entirely unnerved.

"I say," he said, a little awkwardly. "Buck up. They'll be looking for us—both the boat and the tug, and when the rain drops, they'll be pretty sure to run across us."

The man uncovered his face, and Jack Blair saw him clearly for the first time.

"Great sticks! Dug. Ogilvie!" he said, and could say no more.

The young man made a strange noise in his throat.

"You, Jack Blair!" he said, breathing quickly for a moment.

To each of them, the recognition seemed to be the strangest thing that had happened in either of their lives. For when last Jack Blair had seen Douglas Ogilvie, but three days before, he had been working at the same desk in the head office of the Scottish Banking Company, with his hair parted in the minute manner which distinguished him, and his feet in the artistic socks which he affected.

"How did—how did you come here?" Jack Blair asked, slowly.

The great mass of iron upon which they floated crashed its unwieldy length into a big wave at that second, and Douglas Ogilvie cried out something that was half a note of terror and half a warning. But in the flash of time that followed his question, Blair thought that a queer, furtive look leapt into his eyes. It seemed to Jack Blair like the look of a man groping for a lie.

The big wall of water passed, leaving them breathless.

"I stowed away," Ogilvie said, not looking at Blair. "I was sick of life—yonder. The grind of the thing got on my nerves. So I stowed away on this infernal thing, in one of the holes, with as much grub as I thought would last me. Thought there'd be less chance of being found than on a ship. Crept on the night before you left Greenock after scouting round the whole day. Those Highland chaps in the hutch there never scented me. But when the water began to slop over on to me, and those fellows left in their boat, I thought it time to come out."

His lips trembled, his eyes went constantly, with fear in them, to the spray-misted waves that heaved and broke around them.

"What—what are you doing here, Blair?" he asked.

"Taking a trip to Trondhjem with my uncle," Jack Blair said, shortly. "He's skipper of the tug yonder, you know."

He could not tell why he disbelieved the story of the sea-soaked, miserable-looking young man who crouched by his side, trying to fight the obvious terror that possessed him. He had never been very close chums with Ogilvie. But the idea of Dug. Ogilvie as a voluntary stowaway seemed rather ridiculous. He had always seemed almost aggressively flush of cash, and had the reputation of being a "nut" in the Scottish Banking Company.

He stared through the *haar* of falling rain for a glimpse of the tug, remembering with a chill he could not suppress the words his uncle had spoken regarding the currents that ran on that west coast of Scotland. The great, unwieldy thing to which they clung might had been swung miles away from the *Prince Charlie* already. The rain had slackened, but the air was still very thick. The sea was heaving sluggishly in that false calm which sometimes prevails when a gale veers round a little before making a fresh and reinvigorated onslaught. There was no sign of the tug or the boat.

Ogilvie caught Blair nervously by the shoulder as the caisson rolled sickeningly.

"They—they've left us!" he said, with a sob in his voice. "The hounds!"

"It's the mist," Blair said, curtly.

He hauled in the rope that was still round his waist, and laughed a little shortly. It was no more than twenty feet long, and was cut off clean as by a knife at the end. He remembered that his uncle had spoken vigorously and fluently to one of the sailors who had cut a score or so yards from the rope that had lain coiled in the starboard boat for some purpose or other. Obviously, the mischief had never been repaired, and Mr. McIndoe had not noticed it.

Jack Blair leaned against the tarpaulin hutch, bracing his feet against a rusty bolt in the iron deck of the caisson, and tried to think. The *Prince Charlie* had been about forty miles to the south-east of Skerryvore Lighthouse, almost within sight of the Island of Colonsay, making north-westward to get outside the Hebrides. Without compass or landmark of any kind, they might be sweeping out into the Atlantic on the fantastic craft beneath their feet, or land might loom out of the rain-mist at any moment. Jack Blair's imagination tried to think what it would be to crash on a rocky shore among the breakers of a north-westerly gale on the great iron thing they clung to.

"Just have to wait and see," he said, aloud.

A sudden long gust of wind roared past his ears, and the caisson heeled dizzily. Ogilvie closed his eyes like a man who was deadly

sick. A welter of water swept over them, knee deep, sucking at them fiercely as it poured in white cascades from the shining steel surface around them. To Jack Blair, it was a clear miracle that they did not slide down the sloping smoothness into the grey sea that lapped up at the swaying caisson. Once he had seen a half-drowned weasel clinging to the smooth lid of a wooden box as it whirled and spun down the flooded Clyde in its tumultuous upper reaches. He felt like the weasel—except that he had no claws.

He turned to Ogilvie, who sprawled, oozing salt water from his clothes over the tarpaulin hutch.

"Where's the hole you hid in?" he said, quickly. "We'll have to get shelter of some kind. If another sea like that comes——"

Ogilvie motioned behind him, with a dry sob and incoherent words.

"Come on!" Blair said, taking him by the arm.

The great caisson seemed to be spinning round slowly, with a wide sweeping movement that disturbed Blair's interior abominably, and made Ogilvie groan. As they crept on all fours across the expanse of wet metal, another sea came, and they had to cling with fingers and feet to the protruding rivets as the water tore at them.

"There," Ogilvie said, pointing. "But it's full of sea-water now."

Almost in the centre of the big floe of iron a bubble of white water came from what seemed to be a wide, round aperture with the lid off.

As Jack Blair crawled near he saw that its real purpose was that of a manhole giving access to the interior of the caisson for cleaning purposes. The airtight cover, which had concealed Ogilvie for two days, had long ago been washed away.

"It's like a room inside there," Ogilvie said, unsteadily. "And there was a grating in the cover which gave me air enough. But it was like—like Hades! I scrambled out just in time when the water began to come in. Thought I should never have got the cover off."

"Something to stick to, anyway," Blair said. "If we sit with our legs dangling in the hole—— My aunt, see there!"

He leapt to his feet and stood balancing himself, staring ahead through the grey air. Abruptly, like the developing of an over-exposed photographic print, a pinnacle of black rocks loomed into view, with, behind it, a bare upland of moorland, bleak and uninhabited.

"Land!" Ogilvie said, hoarsely, with swift hope on his voice. "We shall be on it in a few minutes——"

"Hope not," Jack Blair said, grimly. "Look at the breakers! My word, she's spinning like a top!"

He sprawled suddenly, with a thud, to the metallic surface beneath his feet. It was as though some giant had seized the mighty thing they stood upon and began to rotate it, rolling it dizzily as he did so, pressing it down on every side with his hands, swinging it in gigantic mischief, meaning to spill the two humans who clung to it into the sea. The pinnacle of rock slid to starboard, and, through the rain which still shaded everything, a narrow bay opened ahead of them. Something in the fierce flow of the water, and the steady, liquid roar that reached his ears above the wet lash of the rain and the wind, made Blair cry out with sudden understanding.

"Corryvrechan, by jove!" he said. "Of all places!"

Only once had Jack Blair struck that fierce tide-flow which can sometimes turn steamers back in their own track, the overwhelming rush of water which runs like a great mill-race between the Island of Jura and the Islet of Scarba. He had been cruising the Western Islands in his little ten-tonner then, and once or twice since he had had extremely vivid nightmares founded upon the fierce half-hour he had fought for his life and the life of the *Pixie* in that welter of conflicting waters. A north-westerly gale was blowing now, and the tide was flowing furiously.

"Hold fast!" he called.

The caisson tipped over so that, for a full half-minute, they seemed to be clinging to a sloping metal wall. For a panic-stricken moment Blair thought it would have turned turtle. Then, spinning ponderously, it swept forward on the flow.

Ogilvie clung to the hutch with a pallid face.

"It'll—it'll touch land in a few minutes, surely," he said, his hand at his mouth. Blair thought the wild look had come back to his eyes, and judged that his overwrought nerves had reached breaking point.

"Not yet, I hope," he said, jerkily, crawling on his stomach to the side of the caisson and staring over the sheer twenty-foot drop to the licking, leaping water, pocked and marked as it was with a hundred little whirlpools, "or we're goners. These rocks are like knives, and the breakers would grind us to pieces in no time. Don't know how——"

He was speaking thus, more to himself than to Ogilvie, watching the tortured water and lifting his eyes to the bleak shore, when some instinct moved him to look round suddenly. He tried to leap to his feet with a startled cry he could not repress, at the sight of Douglas Ogilvie, standing over him with the expression of a madman in his eyes.

"What——"

The word left his lips in the very second that Ogilvie thrust out his two arms with all his strength and caught him by the shoulders as he knelt there, between standing and sitting. There was no question of keeping his balance. Had he thought of it, startled amazement had drained the strength out of him.

Jack Blair went overboard, head first.

He hardly felt the chill of the water as it closed over him. The sensation of being caught in the grasp of something irresistible, something that lifted and whirled him as a swollen gutter lifts and whirls a piece of straw, overcame every other feeling with its horror of helplessness. He came up to the grey daylight gasping and fighting, and went under again, felt himself swept against the sides of the caisson, and then jerked away. So much icy anger at the treachery of Ogilvie was in his brain that he felt no fear.

He rose to the surface again. The caisson, in one of its dips, overhung him, blotting out the sky. He had a glimpse of the dripping ladder but a foot or less from his head, and leapt out of the water to reach it. The wrench, as the caisson swung over again and lifted him high and dripping, seemed to dislocate his arm. But he clung grimly. Above, peering over the rim of the caisson, he could see the white face of Douglas Ogilvie.

As he swung there in mid-air, he began to climb the slender, swaying ladder, clinging with hands and feet.

He began to climb slowly, rung by rung, pausing when the roll of the ladder to which he clung was too violent. He had reached half-way when Ogilvie's voice, shrill and cracked, sounded.

"Stop! Stop there!"

He tried to look up with a cool brain.

"You mad brute!" he said, slowly. "Why did you shove me over like that?"

Ogilvie gave a strange laugh. It was queer that Jack Blair should feel something that was like pity for a second at the sight of his drawn, nerve-shattered face.

He answered with another question.

"Why have you—climbed back?" he said, his voice wavering. "I wanted it to be soon over. I shall have to—to push you over again."

Jack Blair laughed fiercely, and began to climb slowly up the swinging ladder.

"Two can play at that game," he said.

He knew quite well that fear and privation had turned Ogilvie's brain, and yet could not guess the reason for the savage thing he had just done.

"Stop there!" Ogilvie said again from above.

Jack Blair, looking up, saw that he was working swiftly with a clasp-knife at the lashings of the ladder, and paused with a leaping heart. The caisson was still spinning and rolling, and now and then a hissing wave licked up to him. The big sweeping seas had ceased, but it was more difficult than ever to keep a firm hold. He could see Ogilvie's twisted mouth and bright eyes and a vein that stood out on his temple, quite plainly.

"What's up?" he said again, fighting with himself to keep a grip on his nerve.

Ogilvie paused with the knife poised in his hand. At the sight of him, drenched, dishevelled, and wild-looking, it recurred to Jack Blair's memory, with a pang of wonder, that he had once heard him referred to in the bank as the "exquisite Ogilvie."

Ogilvie spoke slowly and sullenly.

"I'm—I'm running away from the bank," he said. "That's what's up. I've been playing the giddy ass. I've done 'em in for three hundred odd pounds. I suppose they'd find it out the very day I hooked it. That was the same day you went on your holidays. It was just a matter of putting the wrong figures in the No. 9 ledger which only went through your hands and mine. I've been thinking ever since you came on to this cursed thing that if—if you never went back to the bank, and I did, they'd be sure it was you, and I could run straight after that——"

"You cur!" Jack Blair said, drawing in his breath swiftly. "It wouldn't wash with them. They'd know——"

Ogilvie showed his teeth for a moment.

"No names!" he said. "I've told you because you wanted to know, and now——"

He bent over the half-severed ladder-lashings again with the knife in his hand. Jack Blair thought he felt the ladder tremble beneath him, and looked down involuntarily at the spinning, bubbling water beneath him. The caisson was leaping and rolling like a wild thing. One moment its smooth side sloped high above him, and he was clinging to the ladder as a fly clings to a wall. The next it slanted forward again and he could see nothing of Ogilvie above, save his fingers clutching at the rim, and the flap of a cut lashing which Ogilvie's knife had already bitten into.

He began to climb swiftly up the ladder, with a growl. As the caisson swung back drunkenly and Ogilvie overtopped him, Ogilvie slashed at his hands, and he felt the hot sear of the blade across all his fingers.

Ogilvie aimed at his head with a choked cry, and he ducked, holding with one hand to the top rung of the ladder, trying to seize Ogilvie's arm with the other.

"You miserable scug!" Jack Blair said, between his set teeth.

He lifted himself upon the smooth deck of the caisson, and Ogilvie, with a livid face, struck at him.

The crash came just as they sprawled over each other. To Jack Blair it sounded like the rattling of a thousand falling biscuit tins as the great iron box, upon which he had made so strange and adventurous a journey, struck the rocks on the lift of a big wave. Twice the great thing heaved, slipping off again with a long, grinding noise. The third time it spilled the two of them helplessly, rolling them together down the tilted deck ungracefully and contemptuously. They dropped into the breaking white water that foamed across the fringe of black rock to the salt-withered grass beyond. Jack Blair lifted Ogilvie, as he struggled in the foam with the desperation of a man who cannot swim, and hauled him to shallow water.

Together they waded knee-deep ashore. Blair had a vision of two men running down the slope towards him, and of Ogilvie moving with a staggering gait along the beach until he disappeared round the curve of a headland.

"Narrow—narrow escape!" Jack Blair said, unsteadily, and sat down on a wet rock, wondering why he was laughing so foolishly and uncontrollably.

* * * * *

In the grey of the following morning the

Prince Charlie came from Oban, where she had put back after cruising round in the rain-mist for hours, Captain Donaldson having received Jack Blair's telephone message from Crinan. Half the population of Jura had been down to the beach the night before, helping to secure the strange derelict that had run on their shores, so that it would not slip back into the sucking whirlpools of Corryvrechan again.

Jack Blair sailed aboard the *Prince Charlie* as she went, on the ebb of the tide, out of Corryvrechan.

Douglas Ogilvie had disappeared. But a full three weeks later, as he sat in the hotel at Trondhjem with Captain Donaldson, the post brought him a letter addressed in Douglas Ogilvie's handwriting. It was a scrawl of blotted writing, written upon the note-paper of the *Kara Maru* mail steamer to Australia. It stated that he had given himself up to the bank three days after the caisson had run ashore in Corryvrechan. His uncle had paid the deficiency in his accounts, the bank had stopped the threatened prosecution, and he had sailed for Australia, there to start life anew.

Jack Blair read the last paragraph as he held the letter over the hotel stove.

"I can't go without writing to ask you to forgive all that madness of mine. You'll believe me when I tell you that I was half insane on that horrible caisson. Maybe I shall see you, years from now, after I've made good. But I couldn't wait till then."

Jack Blair dropped the letter into the stove. "Poor beggar!" he said, softly. "Good luck to him!"

Fenner's Great Idea

DICK FENNER said, while ragging
in our dormit'ry one night,
"I say, you chaps, I vote we
give the Lower Fifth a fright.
I'll bag a master's cap and gown,
and when they're out of bed
Come storming in the dormit'ry—
they'll take me for the Head."

A ripping game, we all agreed,
to pull Brown Major's leg,
As Fenner said he badly needed
taking down a peg;
For since he'd got his colours
he had been a silly fool,
And swanked about as though he were the
great man of the school.

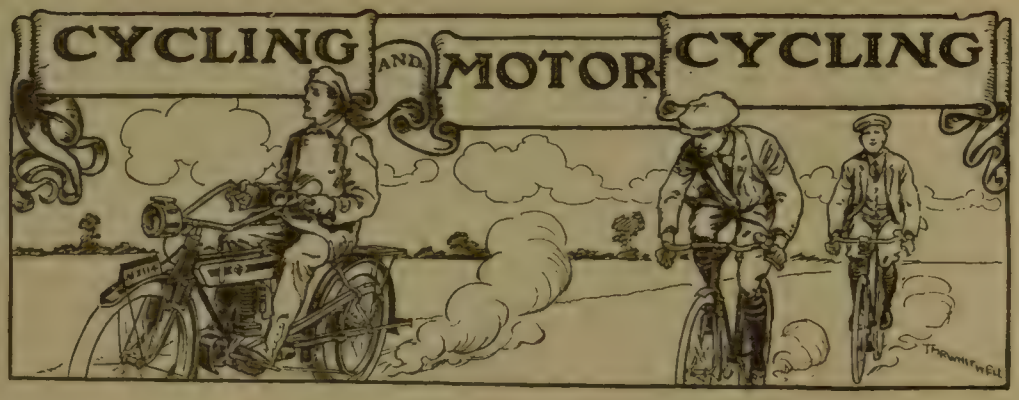
We held a council in the gym. and laid our plans
next day;
But Johnson, like the ass he is, gave half the
show away.
I didn't hear till evening, but it made me pretty
sick
To find that Smith and Mortimer both knew
it would be Dick.

The others hadn't guessed it, so we waited for
the fun;
The door came bursting open, and the chaps
began to run:
Brown Minor turned a somersault, and sev'ral
of them fell—
"How *dare* you, sirs, when lights are out?"
(Dick did it jolly well!)

Smith, knowing of our secret, ragged about with
might and main,
And shouted, "Keep your wool on, you'll be
wanting it again!
Buck up! Why don't you catch me? P'r'aps
you'll do it if you're quick!"
Then grabbed a pillow from his bed, and flung
it straight at Dick.

It got him squarely in the face, and knocked
his cap off too.
I heard a gasp from Mortimer, and Smith
looked very blue—
"Report yourselves to-morrow, and return at
once to bed!"
You see, it wasn't Fenner—for it chanced to
be *the Head!*

LESLIE M. OYLER.



By ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

Editor of "Engineering Wonders of the World." Author of "How it Works," etc.

FITTING A NEW VALVE SLEEVE.

THIS is occasionally a very necessary operation; the sleeve may either have "perished" by lapse of time and become leaky, or been damaged by removal of the valve, and its replacement is then unavoidable. The business of getting a new sleeve in position may give a lot of trouble, or be simplicity itself, according to the manner in which it is carried out. This is the proper way to go about it: Remove every atom of the old sleeve, part of which may stick to the valve near the seating, and scrape or emery-paper the valve bright all over. Then polish it with a little French chalk, and use a pin to remove any matter that may be present in the central hole.

The new sleeve should be cut off quite square at what will be the top end, and be ¼in. longer than the distance between the seating and tip of the valve. Stretch it to make sure that it is in good condition. If it shows surface cracks, reject it for a better one, should such be available. Drop a little French chalk into the inside of the sleeve, which is then rolled backwards and forwards between finger and thumb to distribute the chalk and make the rubber warm and more elastic. Blow out all surplus chalk. The sleeve will then slide over the valve as easily as one can wish, without doubling over at the top, wrinkling, or requiring to be stretched to get it on. Work the top end over the seating into the little recess beyond, so that the sharp corner may get a good grip. The surplus at the other end may come in useful at some later date, should the top be destroyed, and the sleeve require to be shortened or reversed.

Before replacing the valve in the stem, rub a little French chalk on the outside of the sleeve round the seating. This will help to prevent sticking.

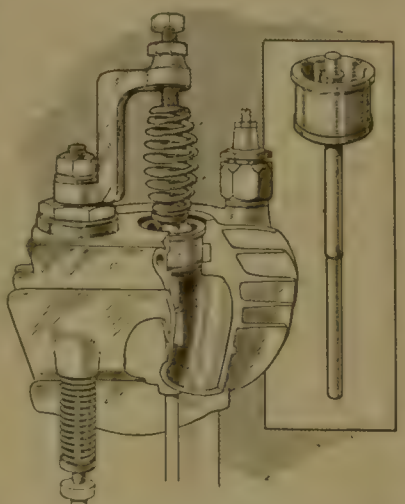


FIG. 1.—The de Lissa air-cooled exhaust valve in position in cylinder (left) and separate (right). (Reproduced by permission of *Motor Cycling*.)

FITTING NEW BRAKE-BLOCKS

Don't let your brake-blocks wear down until the shoes almost touch the rim; lest, perchance, you should find that the brake fails to act when you are in dire need of it. A pair of blocks can be bought for a very few pence, and if you go to a dealer who is agent for the make of machine which you ride, you will be able to get the blocks of the proper size, which will not require any cutting about to make them enter the shoes. This simplifies matters a good deal, as the old blocks can be removed and the new ones inserted without dismantling the brake.

If, however, the blocks obtainable are too large, time is generally saved by detaching the shoes for fitting. The fibre is extremely tough and difficult to shape, and I have found a flat rasp a much more effective tool than even a sharp knife. Be careful to keep the groove on each side well on the slant, so that the metal of the shoe shall touch the sides of the gripped part of the block all over; and when the size is approximately correct, remove

the surplus by small degrees, testing the fit frequently.

When replacing the shoes make sure that they are on their correct sides—that is, with their closed ends at the forward end. If they are wrong way about, the blocks will probably

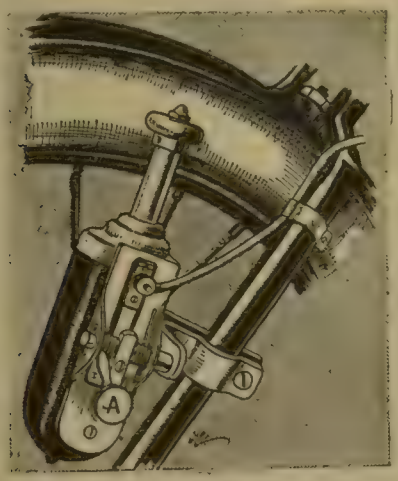


FIG. 2.—Tyre-driven dynamo for electric lighting on motor-cycles.

be pulled out by the wheel, and disaster may result.

The brake adjustments should be so arranged that the tread of a new block is about ⅛in. from the rim. This will allow for a fair amount of wearing down before readjustment will be needed. *Too* close setting reduces the gripping power of the hand.

A MYSTERIOUS LEAK

Have you ever had to do with an inner-tube which persisted in deflating itself though apparently absolutely beyond suspicion as regards air-tightness? I have, on more than one occasion, and must confess to being fairly beaten on all but the last, condemning the tube as "porous." In each case the tube resolutely refused to show the least air bubble when plunged under water, and stretched till it "ballooned" between my hands; and as regularly refused to hold air when put in the cover and blown up—to a much greater pressure, of course, than was possible with the tube unconfined.

The problem was to reproduce the inside-the-cover conditions without hiding the tube. By way of experiment I got a long piece of strong string netting of small mesh, inflated the tube till it made a circle, and encased it in the netting, which was secured by running a string through the meshes close to the tube. I then put the whole thing under water, and pumped air in until the tube bulged out in an ominous way through every mesh, at a pressure which would assuredly have burst it had the netting given way. The leak now showed itself at the joint in the tube—a very tiny leak too—and I was able to stop it by affixing a patch and holding it and the tube in a vice till the solution had set.

CYCLING IN DIRTY WEATHER

This paragraph is prompted by the rain which is pouring at the moment of writing, and has been so doing for the last twenty-four hours. Once upon a time the cycle was regarded as a fair-weather machine, to be laid aside in the winter when roads were stony, wet, and muddy. I can remember distinctly a feeling of adventure when I first decided that seasons should not interfere with my cycling; though twenty years ago roads were not what they are now—at least in the district where I then lived—and the snort of the steam-roller not so familiar a sound. Nowadays, thanks to tar-macadam, non-skid tyres, change-speed gears, and suitable overalls, one is not so dependent on weather conditions. Given my mackintosh cape of good size and a pair of stout thigh leggings, I am prepared to go anywhere in reason, pour the rain never so heavily, provided the occasion be sufficiently important. My cape is long enough to come well down over the handle-bars, almost to the front mud-guard when I lean slightly forward, and has a couple of pieces of lead sewn to the front edge, a foot apart. These weights prevent the cape being lifted easily by the wind or sagging sufficiently to hold water. Lighter weights behind secure me from having the cape blown over my head.

A clean handkerchief inserted between linen

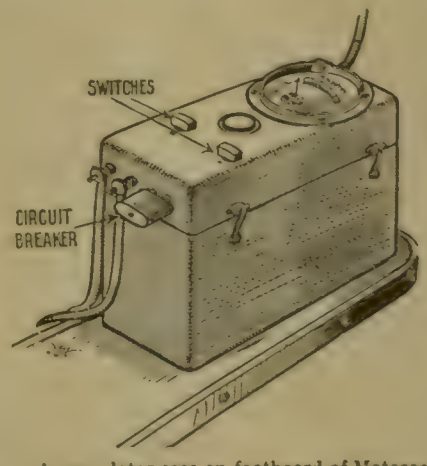


FIG. 3.—Accumulator case on footboard of Motosacoche.

collar and neck and folded over the top of the first, prevents the collar being dirtied by the cape collar when turned up and buttoned, and arrests any drops of water that may find their way in.

I have long discarded leggings of thin stuff rubbered on the inside only, and adopted in their stead a pair made of thin rubber sandwiched between two layers of twill, which protect it on both sides from damage. This material is as strong as could be desired, and one may pull a legging vigorously without fear of it coming in half. But I am not quite satisfied with the shape of my present pair, which includes a graceful "waist" just above the spat, thereby rendering them rather difficult

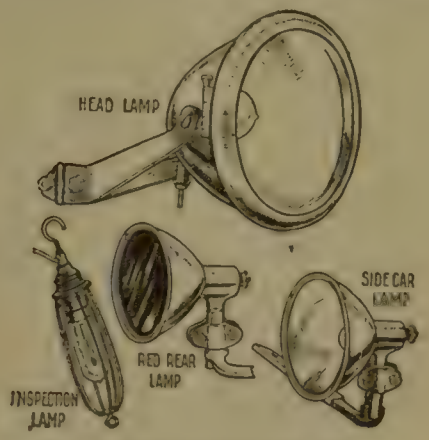


FIG. 4.—Electric motor-cycle lamps.

to draw on or off. My next purchase will be straight in the leg, like those which a policeman wears, and will not button up at the bottom, as fumbling with buttons is tedious and often dirty work, to say nothing of distracting when the train is already in the station.

When rolling up a cape begin by turning the neck part inwards, so that it shall not be exposed to dust. Leggings should be rolled up from the top towards the spats, which come outside. By the bye, a flat steel hook sewn to the inside of the top of each strap, to go over the trouser-band, is much handier than the ordinary button-on arrangement.

A NEW KIND OF EXHAUST-VALVE

The Motosacoche people have introduced a novel form of exhaust-valve—named the de Lissa, after its inventor—for their motor-cycles. It is a short cylinder, closed at the bottom—which fits into a seating like an ordinary valve—and open at the top. The cylindrical part is able to move freely through a hole in the cylinder head, and has a rim which, when the valve proper is closed, makes a gas-tight fit with a seating on the outside of the head. Reference to Fig. 1, which shows the valve both separately and in place in the cylinder, will make this explanation easier to follow.

The valve is held down by a powerful spring pressing against an overhead bracket. This is just strong enough to keep the valve in place against the pressure of an explosion, which tends to lift the top rim; but only just sufficient, and as there is no gas pressure on the top of the valve, the lifting cam has less work to do than in the ordinary engine. Less power is therefore wasted on the valve; but the chief object of the design is to expose the valve to the air and keep it cool, which in turn does away with the need for grinding in periodically. The cylindrical part fits the hole so closely that very little of the exhaust gases can escape that way when the valve is lifted.

Incidental advantages of the system are—freedom from breakage of the valve-stem, as this is not subjected to tension; and the easy adjustment of the spring by screwing down the bolt in the bracket.

A PRETTY LITTLE ELECTRIC-LIGHTING OUTFIT

To what I wrote last month about the electric lighting of motor-cycles I will add a few remarks about the installation on the Motosacoche. The source of energy is a small direct-current, tyre-driven dynamo (Fig. 2) clipped to the right-hand tube of the back fork. An adjusting screw, A, is fitted to bring the pulley at the top away from the tyre when current is not required.

The current passes through a mechanical automatic cut-in and cut-out to a battery of three unspillable cells enclosed in a box (Fig. 3), fitted with a combined ampere-meter and volt-meter, and two switches in the lid. One switch serves the head light and red tail lamp; the other a connection for a safety light on a side-car, if attached; and there is a plug for the inspection lamp, which will be found in valuable for road adjustments at night. (Fig. 4.)

So here you have a very compact, up-to-date installation such as should rejoice the heart of any motor-cyclist whose inclination or business often takes him on to the roads after dark. The power absorbed by the dynamo is so small as to be inappreciable in the case of a well-engined machine.

THE "CONNAUGHT" TWO-STROKE

This motor-cycle (Fig. 5) is the product of the Bordesley Engineering Company, of Birmingham, who are well known as makers of two-stroke marine engines, and bring much experience with this particular form of motor to bear on the manufacture of small units suitable for the road machine. The engine, which develops 2¾ horse-power to 3 horse-power, has a very large outside fly-wheel—much larger than could be accommodated conveniently inside a case.

The piston has in it a hole which, just at the end of an up-stroke, uncovers a port leading to the carburetter. The partial vacuum in the crank-chamber draws in the charge, which is

imprisoned by the closing of the port early in the next downward stroke of the piston, and compressed ready for admission to the cylinder when the piston uncovers an inlet port in its wall. The new charge sweeps out the exhaust gases, already being liberated through a third port, previously uncovered by the piston, and is trapped for compression—in the cylinder this time—when the piston returns.

Lubricating oil is mixed with the petrol and enters the crank-case with the charge. An ingenious device is used to prevent it leaking out along the axle past the bearings, which it naturally tries to do. A careful rider will get 100 to 130 miles to the gallon of petrol, and 2,000 miles to the gallon of oil. For a small extra charge the makers will adapt the engine to run on paraffin. If this fuel be used, the running costs for fuel and oil are reduced to one-tenth of a penny per mile, which surely is a low enough figure to be satisfactory to the most parsimonious motor-cyclist. Years ago I had a 2 horse-power Clement Garrard machine which was even more economical—petrol being then only 10*d.* per gallon—as it would travel one hundred miles over give-and take roads on little more than two quarts of spirit and a ridiculously small amount of oil. But it was not up to pulling a side-car, which the two-geared "Connaught" will do.

CURING A RATTLING MUDGUARD

If the rattling is due to a nut or screw having become loose or to the metal round it having corroded away, the proper course is to do the necessary tightening or have the guard repaired. But nuts and screws constantly exposed to damp, as those of a mudguard, sometimes prove very obstinate, and to deal with them one may have to take the wheels out. A quite successful remedy of a more or less temporary nature is to pass a piece of hat elastic several times round the guard and a tube or other support above it, stretching the elastic moderately. This will cure the trouble until the guard can be put right.

OILING THE CHAIN

In wet weather a naked chain should be oiled frequently to keep wet out. Apply the oil liberally and wipe off the surplus with a rag, as one doesn't want loose oil flicking about over the tyres and one's trousers. Always make a chain as clean as you can before oiling. An old toothbrush comes in very handy for this purpose. The tightening of a chain after a wet ride means that it requires a good cleaning and thorough lubrication.

THE RIVET NUT

Have a look occasionally at the nut which locks the screw rivet in the chain. If it should have dropped off, get a new one put on as soon as possible, and as a temporary precaution burr over the screwed end ***slightly*** by tapping it with a light hammer while a heavier hammer is held against the head.

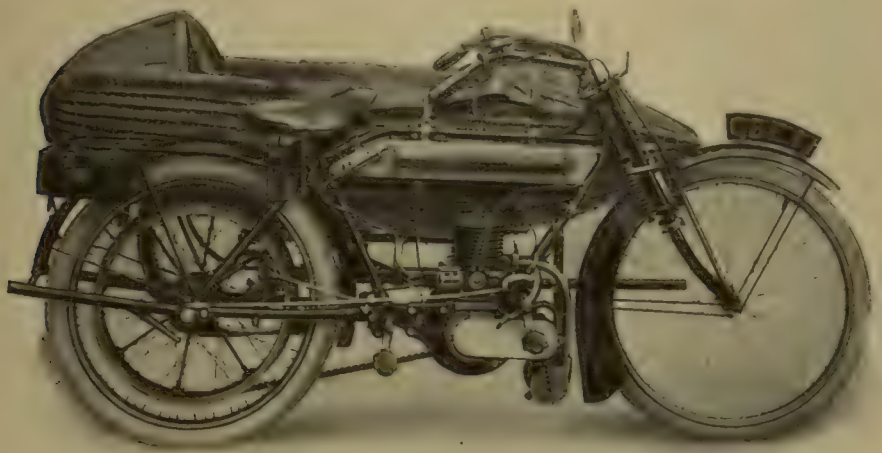
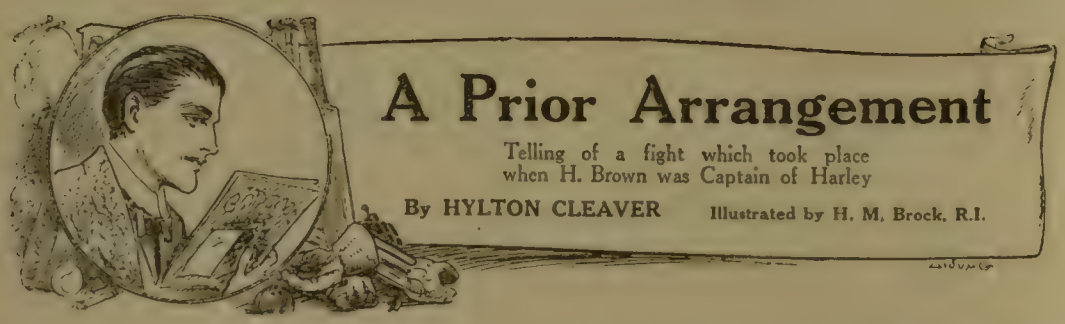


FIG. 5.—The two stroke 2½—3 h.p. Connaught motor-cycle.



A Prior Arrangement

Telling of a fight which took place when H. Brown was Captain of Harley

By HYLTON CLEAVER Illustrated by H. M. Brock, R.I.

CHAPTER I

MR. SAINSBURY, the boxing master at Harley, sat in his room practising a sabre drill with a blue pencil on foolscap. He looked up as a knock came at the door, and pushed his papers aside when he saw H. Brown on the threshold.

"Ah, Brown," said he. "I wanted to see you. Sit down, will you? Er—there will be a meeting of the Games Committee this afternoon. They are proposing you as captain of boxing."

H. Brown sat bolt upright on the extreme edge of his chair, and fingered his cap with the rapid movements of a juggler. He would have felt much the same sensation if a doctor had suddenly stopped him as he was walking along the road and said: "Hullo, I see you've got appendicitis. You'd better come along with me to the hospital." It was so unexpected, so altogether absurd.

"Me, sir?" said Brown.

"Yes. Blair and Shepherd have both left, you see, and you're the next on the list now. I think you'll make a very good captain."

"H'm," said Brown. "I'm afraid I—that is——"

"So I thought I'd just give you the tip to turn up at the meeting. Right you are, Brown. I shall be very pleased to give you any advice you want." He nodded pleasantly, and half turned back to his desk.

Brown rose dazedly, stood for a moment, and then wandered slowly out of the room like a man condemned to the rack. Outside he stopped for a moment in the corridor to think. It was ridiculous—he, Brown, captain of boxing!

At first he felt inclined to go back and tell Mr. Sainsbury that he could not take on the job—this thing was not in his sphere at all. He had been unwilling to fight at Aldershot the year before. He had got into trouble during the holidays. Howell, his greatest chum, had left. Blair and Shepherd, men of experience who knew the ropes and were well suited to command, had left too. Brown, Harley middle-weight, public school champion, mice-king, was still at Harley—so take he must the official position. Yes, that was evidently what had prompted this decision; it seemed reasonable enough. And he had promised Howell that he would box.

There was no way out. Then he recollected his chum's last words during the holidays. "If you're ever worried or can't decide what to do; if you're in a hole of any kind," Howell had said, "you go to Laing. He's one of the very best chaps I've ever known. He'll show you the way out of any old mess under the sun. Just you remember, and don't feel awkward if you want him at all. You go to him, and he'll stand by you. When you're lonely, you know," he had added, knowing Brown's temperament, "it's *something* to know of a man who'll turn up and hold your coat, while you stand up and scrap things."

So Brown, remembering, went to Laing, and the historic captain of Harley smiled upon him in welcome, and was glad to see him.

Brown unburdened his doubts and fears, as far as a man such as he could be expected to unburden himself, and Laing reassured him with pearls of philosophy. He was himself a keen follower of the school boxing, and knew all the men likely to be required that year, and on this point he made a few suggestions.

"Prior," he pointed out, "is a middle-weight, and so, of course, are you. There's another man I noticed last term who's come on in leaps and bounds, from the scientific point of view, and I doubt very much whether Prior would beat him. He's a chap called Bell. Anyway, with both those men available, and no heavy-weight in sight at all, it looks as though you'll have to try to put on beef and go for that class yourself, doesn't it? There are several promising sort of people at the other weights."

"Yes," said Brown, his reserve slightly thawed. "Yes."

"Now, Prior," continued Laing, "is a man whose antics I've been watching lately. I'm afraid you may find him a little difficult to control. He was dropped on several times last term for taking part in various jackass side-shows of the school life, and you may find him hard to train properly. Still, I should see him and warn him yourself to try to behave sanely, and perhaps he'll tone down a bit."

Curiously enough, this point had occurred to Brown also. He had no reliance on Prior; the man was, in his sight, an abomination. So he pulled himself together, and feeling as tongue-tied as ever, he sought Prior out early in the term and said:—

"I say, Prior, try to keep fit and all that, won't you?"

"Eh?" said Prior. "What d'you mean—fit?"

"I mean don't go getting into rows this term. You may be wanted as a middle-weight this year, if I go for the heavies, and you'll have to keep in with the beaks in that case."

"Oh—ah," said Prior, airily, "that's all right."

With Laing's stalwart diminutiveness behind him, Brown gradually accustomed himself, after this, to the duties of captain. He went regularly to the gymnasium, attending to his pets at all sorts of unconscionable hours. He imparted his knowledge to novices, boxed with various aspirants to Aldershot honours, and quite endeared himself to Stevens, the instructor. Howell wrote him enthusiastic letters from Oxford, and these also encouraged him. And term went on its way.

It was strange that this year of Brown's captaincy should have been the very one during which certain matters cropped up such as very few captains would have known how to manage. They call that sort of thing coincidence, I fancy. It is a poor word.

CHAPTER II

THE Trials at Harley were the result of a weeding-out process (where necessary), and consisted in a contest at each weight between the two selected men (where possible).

Throughout the term Prior, whom the school considered pretty certain to be their finally selected representative in the Aldershot middle-weights, had been unusually restrained, and had kept fairly clear of trouble. Fate, however—which, all things considered, is a highly vicious and unreasonable force—ordained that, during the week preceding the Trials, he should take it into his head to walk abroad after lights out, and returning in inky darkness seek the side door of the Great Hall, by means of which, being in the school house, he had cunningly made his exit, and which he had contrived to leave unlocked, and that he should find that this refused to open.

It also ordained that when, growing annoyed with the door, he exerted his strength and battled with it, it should suddenly yield, to the accompaniment of an amazing crash, which seemed to Prior's alarmed ears to be rather more deafening than the noise one would expect if the Albert Hall suddenly toppled over and barred one's path. He stood, horror-struck, in the doorway. Presently he realised what had happened; they were preparing the stage for a Latin play that was shortly to be given at the school. Evidently the porters had moved something heavy and leant it against the door. *Voilà!*

On occasions such as this, one's brain seems to take unto itself the form of a joy-wheel in rapid motion. Thoughts, resourceful ideas endeavour to obtain a foothold, slip, shoot off in ungainly fashion, and lie all adust on one side. Slowly Prior decided that he was "in for it." He did not move. He just stood stock still and listened. In cinema plays he would, of course, have dashed away and hid behind a blade of grass or perhaps in the head master's bedroom; in such dramas everybody—hero, villain, or accomplice—runs away on the least pretext, and this cowardice provides the plot. But in real life ordinary people mostly stand still and wait for something to happen. Presently Prior stepped into the hall, and trod on the wretched screen that was about to cause his downfall. At the same moment a light appeared at the other end of the hall. Attached to this, by the hand, was a master, and with him a porter.

Then the hall was suddenly flooded with electric light. As the captors advanced, they peered wonderingly into the corner where Prior stood. He had not tried to hide. For a moment he had thought of pretending to be walking in his sleep. This idea had cannoned off his revolving brain, amongst many others. Now, since he was certain to be discovered, and since he was in practice less of a Dare-devil Dick than he was in theory, he just awaited capture with resignation. The ignominy of being discovered in a crouching attitude behind a chair, and being hauled out by the scruff of the neck like a thieving cat, had in no way

appealed to him. The master and his attendant sprite advanced. . . . Prior went quietly.

The school heard of his punishment before they heard of his crime, because the former was the more sensational. The report flashed round the school that Prior would, amongst other penal items, be kept in detention for the next two Saturdays. . . . The Trials were fixed for the following Saturday afternoon. Nemesis, you see.

Brown was among the first to hear the news, and he at once went to Laing—not as a child runs to a nurse when it sees a dog, but as a man goes to a doctor when he is conscious of extraordinary pains of a lasting nature.

"You've heard about Prior?" said he, shortly.

Laing nodded.

"Yes," said he. "It was old Brampton collared him. I don't think he realises what he's done. Would you like me to go to see him and try to get some 'revision of the sentence'?"

"I wish you would," said Brown; "it makes things very difficult if he can't box."

And when Laing had set off, Brown started away in search of Prior. He found him just inside the gymnasium, and said without hesitation:—

"What on earth did you want to go assing about for *this* week, out of all the term?"

"The fault," said Prior in his usual silky, slightly insolent tones, "lies not so much in 'assing about,' as you put it, as in being collared. You'll have to get me off."

His manner annoyed Brown very much. It always did.

"There's no 'have to' about it," said he; "you've got yourself into a hole; you'd better get yourself out."

"I suppose you *want* me to box," said Prior, sharply.

"Personally," said Brown, "I shouldn't care tuppence. But as a boxer, you're one of the few middle-weights the school has, so that it's certainly your duty to do so."

"Then you'll jolly well *have* to get me off. You'd better go to see Brampton at once."

Brown looked at him in amazement.

"You seem to be a bit off your head," said he slowly, "you don't seem to know your place."

"Your place," Prior snapped out furiously, "is on the floor, you rotten, jumped-up captain."

Brown stood very still, and glared stolidly like the real Brown of a year ago.

Some hours afterwards when he was thinking over things, it occurred to him that, as he was already standing on the floor, Prior's remark was not particularly brilliant, but at the time he was too astonished to think of a retort on those lines. Instead he said, almost growlingly:

"If you talk like that again, Prior, I shall knock you down."

"H'm," said Prior, "*then* you'll wake up."

This time Brown saw his opening.

"*You* won't," said he, sharply.

It was the quickest thing H. Brown had ever said, and that which in his whole school career most nearly approached to brilliancy.

Prior thought for a moment, and being unable to think of any suitable retort, he merely said:—

"Well, I should advise you to buck up and get me off. And if you've got any sense at all you'll do so."

It's a moot point whether Brown would have actually knocked Prior down, had not a master come up to speak to him at that moment. Possibly he would have done. Probably, as he was captain of boxing, he would not. Anyway, when the master left him again, Prior was gone.

An hour later Mr. Brampton sent for him.

"Prior," said he, "Laing has been to see me. He tells me that the captain of boxing has asked him to intercede for you as you're wanted by the school—to take part in the boxing trials. Laing has put things to me in such a way that I have decided to acquiesce—not on your account, but because I do not wish the school to suffer by your stupidity. I shall allow you to box next Saturday, and you will instead go into detention for the next *three* Saturdays." Prior thanked him and turned away.

In the school grounds he met Brown again.

"Ah," said he, insolently, "glad to find you took my advice, Brown. The school might have made it hot for you if you hadn't."

Again Brown did not knock Prior down. He coloured hotly, however, in the face, glared, and went on.

That day was very busy for Prior. During the afternoon he saw Mr. Brampton in the school and had a further conversation with him, and later still he sought out Bell, the other selected middle-weight, and led him to a remote corner.

"Bell," said he, softly, "I know you're jolly keen on boxing, and on winning these Trials—your governor was a boxing man, wasn't he?"

"Yes," said Bell, in the tone of a man who wonders what's coming next. "Of course I'm keen on winning."

He was a long-limbed, fair-haired boy who waxed enthusiastic over all sports.

"Yes," said Prior—his tone was now very different from that he had adopted with Brown. "I thought so. Well, you've probably heard that I was collared last night, and that Brampton put me in detention for the next two Saturdays."

Bell nodded.

"Hard luck," said he. "I'm awfully sorry."

He knew that Prior was considered certain to beat him.

"Brampton offered to let me out to box, but I had a sudden idea. I knew you were awfully keen, and I thought you'd be anxious to take home a medal for the Trials, to show your governor, so I refused he offer."

"Great Scott!" said Bell. "What on earth for?"

"I thought I'd let you box in the Trials and get a medal. Then when you start to train, you can make some excuse and chuck it up, and I shall come in."

They looked at each other keenly.

"Why," said Bell, at last, "that's awfully decent of you; but, of course, it's absurd. You must take the chance and box me in the Trials."

"It's too late now," said Prior, magnanimously. "I had the chance and refused it. I thought of you—always like to help a keen man. You'll have to do as I say. They'll put some other man up against you — that rabbit Weston, or somebody."

Bell grew thoughtful.

"Of course," said he, presently, "I know you're the better man, and I'll certainly give up my place—but still I wish you'd box." Prior shook his head condescendingly.

"That's all right," said he, "I wouldn't talk about it, though."

Prior did not try to hide, but awaited his capture with resignation. The master and his attendant advanced.

CHAPTER III

BELL sat on a bench in the school grounds, and as an aid to deep thought chewed a caramel. Pleasant, however, as this was, it did not assist Bell in conjuring up what he considered a plausible excuse to Brown for surrendering his place in the Aldershot team, that Prior might gain his colours.

A few days previously he had won his bout in the Trials, beating the aforesaid rabbit Weston with ease. People to whom Prior had boasted that he would make Brown intercede for him with Mr. Brampton had been merely informed, on inquiry of Brown, that "Prior was unable to appear." This had also been Laing's brief answer to all interrogations, and with this Harleyans had to be satisfied.

Bell knew that he would not be allowed to resign his place for Aldershot without some satisfactory explanation, and he also knew that he could not give the real one. Prior had not originally suggested any particular excuse, and even now all he mooted seemed impossible schemes. It was useless to plead an injury or illness, because a medical examination would soon disprove his words. He could not pretend that his parents objected, for his father was known to have been a one-time boxer himself. He could not seem to be funking. He could not just resign. He could not get into trouble at school, as Prior had done. Prior had commenced to show alarm. It seemed for a time that his plans had recoiled and dealt him a disastrous blow.

Bell rose presently and set off to find his own guide, philosopher, and friend, a crony named Marriott.

To him he confided the whole story. Marriott expressed intense disapproval of the methods that had been adopted, described the affair as underhand, doubted Prior's intentions, and hauled Bell over some hard and unpleasantly painful coals. He then gave it as his opinion that the only course left open was for Prior to challenge Bell, and for Bell to accept. A fight, said he, would be the only decent way out. If Prior was so superior to Bell, he need have no fear.

But H. Brown had recently been coaching Bell, and, finding him clever, strong, and vastly improved, had praised his skill. Privately he was convinced that on his present form Bell would beat Prior. Some of his satisfaction had found expression in blunt words of praise, and with these in his memory Bell was beginning to wonder if Prior *was* so unquestionably the better man, and he said so to Marriott, who considered the matter.

"Well," he said, at last, "under the circumstances, and seeing what you've promised, you must take care that he *does* win."

He said this pointedly, and Bell understood, and went away to tell Prior, who, after some few objections had been disposed of by Bell, agreed.

Nevertheless, Prior did so with certain qualms stirring within him. He had thought to get his colours without having to meet Bell, whose skill he had noted. Now he began to see that he might be "up against a snag."

"Well, look here," said he, warily, "I'm not fit, you know, and I haven't started training yet. Don't you go too hard. Remember you promised to give way to me."

"That's all right," said Bell, but as he said it he felt deeply conscious of certain vague regrets.

At first Brown was not inclined to sanction the challenge fight. Then he remembered, however, that Howell, his chum, had particularly asked that Prior might be knocked out of the ring that year in a cascade of gore. Since he was now a heavy-weight he could not do this himself, but he felt pretty confident that Bell could at all events beat the other man, and, anxious to see Prior's arrogance upset, he eventually agreed, and the fight was arranged. News of it soon spread round the school, and an enormous number of enthusiasts gathered together to witness this unusual combat, for the general opinion was that it was only sporting to give Prior a chance of showing his form.

Brown wrote to Howell, who came down to Harley especially to attend the fight, and here again coincidence stepped in, for Howell was a cousin of Marriott's.

The hour and the moment came, and the two men entered the ring. Bell with the earnest look of a man weighed down with great thoughts, and something of the quaint veneer of jubilance of a man taking his seat in the dentist's chair, and Prior with the self-satisfied manner of the man who knows himself to be the favourite.

Then time was called, and the two men shook hands and got busy.

Your good sportsman would, in Prior's position, knowing the fight was his, have stayed any unnecessary vigour he felt competent to put into his work. Prior did not; he was out for glory, out to show Harleyans his amazing skill, and he took care that Bell should not now gain by their contract.

Bell, on the other hand, somehow realised a peculiar fact half-way through the first round.

He suddenly felt that he was the better man. Such a thought generally comes to the finer boxer when he has taken full note of his opponent's points. He felt easy and fresh; knew that this man was good, but not so good as he; was conscious at once that he had the whip hand, that at any moment he might let himself go and gradually wear Prior down. Then, just as he realised this, he remembered his position, with a certain bitterness, and held back the while Prior came in and basted him heartily. And Harleyans nodded sagely, and said that it was plain Prior was the better man.

Howell was standing beside Marriott at the time, apart from the rest on the balcony that ran round the top of the gymnasium.

"H'm," said he, "I thought Bell was better than that from Brown's description. I hoped he'd give Prior a bit of a lacing."

Marriott looked round him cautiously before answering, then:—

"So he could," said he, "but he's not going to."

"What on earth," said Howell, "do you mean?"

Marriott had a high opinion of his cousin, and at that moment he badly wanted someone to sympathise with him, so he told Howell.

"I'll bet you," said the latter, "that Prior's been up to some dirty game."

He remained thoughtful for a time, then, as the first round ended, he turned and left Marriott.

"'Scuse me a minute," said he. "I'll be back presently."

He went hurriedly down the balcony steps, and accosted Laing, whom he had noticed from above.

"What cheer!" said the school captain, enthusiastically. "How art?"

Bell drove again at the face he had come to loathe, and Prior went down Nervously he rose to his feet and put up his hands.

"Will you give me a minute," said Howell, hurriedly, "as man to man—*not* a school captain to Old Boy?"

"What's wrong?" said Laing.

Howell had thought the matter over from every standpoint, and he felt justified in the course he now took.

"Understand, I want you particularly

to take no official notice of this whatever," he said. "I know I can trust you."

"Let her go," said Laing.

Howell did.

* * * * *

"Very well," said Laing, at last; "at the end of the second round, you go and lend a hand with the seconding of Prior, and that'll give me an excuse to go over and whisper to Bell."

Marriott, alone in his misery on the balcony, listened scornfully to the remarks of men around him. Bell, they said was apparently not much good. It was as well, in their opinion, that Prior had challenged him. They would now have a better chance at Aldershot. And Marriott, gnashing his teeth, because with a pal's eye he could see that Bell was holding his hand, suddenly saw, as the second round ended, Howell hurry up to Prior's corner, and assist in sponging his face, and stood aghast. Then he looked across at Bell and saw Laing behind him whispering words of encouragement.

At the end of that second round Bell had turned unhappily to his corner, sinking into his chair. He was still fairly fresh, and Prior was not now hitting so hard as before, for he was tiring. He longed more than ever to let himself go, as he knew that he could, and to land just one or two real drives on Prior's chin. The position was now intolerable. He sighed inwardly at the dreariness of things—cursed himself for his idiocy in ever promising Prior his place—sighed again.

Then as Stevens, who was seconding him, sprang in front and commenced to wave a towel like a castaway sighting a ship, he was suddenly conscious of a voice beside him that he recognised as Laing's. He lay back drinking in the breeze Stevens was sending him, and he turned his head now as Laing spoke.

"I know what you're doing," the latter whispered hurriedly. "I'm in the secret. I want to tell you this. When Prior was put in quod by Brampton, Brown and I tried to get him off and did so. Prior didn't know this and tried to bully Brown into interceding, which he'd already done. Then when Brampton let him off, he thought it was because he'd chin-wagged at Brown, and went to Brown and sauced him over it, till Brown got sick, and came to me again. I decided that as Prior was so self-helpful, we'd let him look after himself. So I went to Brampton and told him we'd decided that it was *not necessary for Prior to appear at the Trials*, and he took the hint and cancelled his leave off—*that's* why Prior *let you* box. Understand?"

All Stevens' skilful seconding in that brief interval was as nothing to those few words of Laing's.

Bell's eyes sparkled, fresh colour came into his cheeks, he felt suddenly imbued with the vigour of ten men.

"Thanks, Laing," he muttered gratefully. "Thanks awfully."

"So," said Laing, "you needn't worry about your promise. *Go in and win.* Understand?"

"Yes," said Bell between his teeth.

Laing stepped back; in the opposite corner Howell was just leaving Prior.

The timekeeper looked up from his watch.

"Time," said he; "last round."

Prior, jumping up from his corner, looked at Bell, as he took the centre of the ring, and, noticing the curious blaze on his face, looked harder. Then they touched hands, and Bell hit him straight in the nose with his left.

From up in the balcony came a sudden surprised cry, and a cheer. Marriott was leaning over the rail in amazement. Prior, hurt, stepped back in hasty surprise; then Bell came at him.

Within half a minute the audience were cheering madly. There is always something fine in the sight of a man, behind on points, putting in all he knows in the last round.

And Bell was doing it. All his skill came into his arms and his gloves in that one round. His defence was that of an old hand. His counters were telling, and Prior knew them to be painful; his leads flashed in and out like cuts from a whip. Always he kept his feet tip-tapping in clever footwork. And he hit harder and harder. Once, as he threw out a terrific right-hander, Prior ducked and came into a clinch.

"What the deuce are you at?" he muttered angrily, under his breath. "What's your game? You'll have me out in a tick."

"You're quite right," grunted Bell, "I shall," and hit with all his force at the face that in the last minute he had grown to hate.

The audience cheered louder and louder. A recovery so wonderful as this had never been seen before. Howell stood between Brown and Laing.

"That cascade of gore," said he; "it's coming—coming. Oh, well boxed! You've got a hot man there, Brown."

"H'm," grunted Brown, "not bad, is he?"

And again Bell drove home the straight left, and Prior, tiring very fast, rocked unsteadily. Now it was seen how much real punishment the man could take whilst keeping his head. He

took one more drive on the face, stumbled back, recovered and, losing his temper, came at Bell with both hands. Bell stood his ground, and his left shot out again, and, landing, made the necessary opening for his right. Prior went down. The glint in Bell's eyes grew harder, fiercer. He just saw red. There was no Prior in the ring. There was just a face that he loathed balanced on a body. As Prior got slowly, nervously it seemed to his feet and put up his hands, Bell feinted with his left, then swung out his right with all the strength of his shoulder behind it. It landed square on the chin, and Prior went down like a felled ox.

Bell had never knocked out a man before, and he stood now, a little uncertain, and waited. Prior had fallen on his back, a little on one side; he raised himself now, resting on one arm, his muscles rigid, a glassy look in his eyes, the corners of his mouth drawn down, his whole face set dazedly.

He made a spasmodic effort to move, to get to his knees, but he never looked at Bell. Then he fell back again, and lay, his face hidden in one curved arm.

They did not wait for the count of ten. Mr. Sainsbury, the referee, rose, and motioned to his second, who came into the ring and carried him out, others helping as he came to the ropes

Then the master rose to his feet.

"Bell," said he, "is the winner."

You may perhaps never have heard a building quiver with the force of a school's cheering, but then you were not in the Harley gymnasium that day.

Sometimes, you see, Nemesis—the Goddess of Retribution — works things out with justice.

When Prior came to, he found a few people looking at him in the gaping way adopted by a crowd round a man in a fit; and, when he had really recovered and had changed, he sought for Bell.

"You cad," said he, simply, when he found him alone.

"Prior," said Bell, "I found out in time. Somehow, Laing got to know — he told me before the last round. You know, Prior, you're a pretty hot-stuff sort of cad yourself."

Prior turned slowly away. Somewhere in the gymnasium Howell at that moment was shaking hands vigorously with Brown.

"The cascade of gore," said he—"did you see it? The cascade of gore—it was fine . . . fine."

And Bell at Aldershot? Ah, that, as Kipling would say, is another story, to be told another time.

A BRAINY TRICK

Big Brother: "Oh, I say, Harold, you know! I can't possibly go out with you wearing that new hat of yours. It's *miles* too big."

Harold (who has no regard for appearances): "Don't you worry; that's all right! I've stuck some blotting paper in it, and no one'll notice."

THE WAY TO WIN

By F. A. M. WEBSTER

Part IV

TRACK EVENTS

WITHIN the space of one short article I find it all too difficult to deal with so vast a subject as track athletics; nevertheless, I will do my best, but will rather divide running into long, middle, and short distances than treat each particular race in detail.

First we will consider the necessary qualifications of the short-distance man. Invariably he is a highly strung, nervous individual, for which I have frequently heard many a school hundred-yard winner bewail his fate. But if he only knew it, the mere fact of his feeling so upset by being kept hanging on the mark is the truest indication that his nervous energy and vitality are screwed up to the very highest pitch. This nervous energy quickly works itself out, but while it lasts the runner is travelling at the very highest rate of speed of which he is capable; therefore the more concentrated the nervous energy the greater will be the speed.

Now the sprint runner belongs to one of two classes: the tall, well-split-up, long-striding, big man; or the little, short, compact, and very muscular chap. Of the first class were Ramsdell and Cartmell, and of the second Applegarth and Walker.

The short, stocky type of sprinter invariably gets in a tremendous lot of work with his shoulders, hips, and arms to lengthen out his stride, while still keeping the body properly under control, as he is well able to do. The short runner carries his arms low and obliquely across the body; whereas the tall man carries them higher, swinging from back to front.

It is as well in training to observe the track of the spikes on the path, and to measure the length of your stride, which should be from six feet (the short man) to seven feet or even more (for the tall chap with a long, raking stride and loose hip action).

Of course, the ideal way to run a sprint race is to get a good, "snappy" start, and to burst over the whole distance at an ever-increasing rate of speed until the tape is broken. It is, however, rarely—if ever—this combination of all the virtues are assembled in the person of one single athlete.

For instance, W. A. Stewart, of the London Hospital, is probably the fastest man out of his holes in the world to-day; but twenty-five yards from home his speed begins to tail-off, and he is frequently beaten by men who are not his real equals in point of speed; on the other hand, D'Arcy, of the Polytechnic Harriers, although not so quick away at the crack of the pistol as is Stewart, yet has an absolutely electrifying burst of speed to rely upon when some 20yds. or 30yds. from the tape in 100yd. races.

The boy who really wishes to get himself into first-class prize-winning form as a sprinter should first of all give himself a course of light dumb-bell exercises (dumb-bells of not more than 1lb. each to be used) to build up the body muscles; for, although it is probably a new theory to you, yet I am absolutely right in saying that the shoulders and arms control the legs which propel you—absolutely! Once

get your body carriage right, and you will find that you are travelling at a far greater rate of speed than you have ever done before.

In running a short-distance race the head and shoulders should be thrust a little forward, and the whole poise of the body is such that if the runner were not travelling at a very high rate of speed indeed it would be utterly impossible for him to retain his balance with the body carried so far forward. Perhaps what I mean may be better understood if it is put this way: the body should be so far forward that the leg is thrust out behind against the ground to give the athlete the required momentum.

Returning to the question of shoulder work —a most important matter to the sprinter— the shoulders should be moved in absolute harmony with the legs, and in such a way that as the *right* foot comes forward and strikes the ground, so the *left* shoulder is thrust out and the arms swing across the body to the right; but the shoulder must not be shot so far forward that the direction of the body is altered or pulled to one side.

In watching sprinters at work boys should not be carried away by the idea that the showy athlete who is all effort is the best; for, on the contrary, the best man is the one who, running absolutely smoothly and without showy action, covers the distance quickest and yet fails to catch the eye.

When travelling at the highest speed, and especially when finishing, the sprinter should be well up on the toes, and as all the best running is done in this manner it is essential that the instep should be raised as much as possible.

(The method of doing this is fully described in my book on "Field Events."*)

Throughout the running, all the body should be carried loosely to give the greatest play to the rapidly moving limbs, the arms, with the backs of the hands to the front, moving easily across the body by the rising and falling shoulders; and this action will also develop the abdominal or stomach muscles, which play no small part in running. You will probably be wondering why I am so emphatic on the necessity of plenty of shoulder work. The reason is because if the shoulders are properly lifted, it helps to lighten the weight on the feet, and the athlete gets as little jar as possible as the foot strikes the track; and the feet should pass as close to the ground as may be—what is known as "keeping the action down." This will induce the runner to shoot out his leg from the hip, thus materially increasing the length of the stride taken.

As regards the finish of a race, perhaps the most common fault among sprinters of all classes, styles, and ages is to throw the head back and the arms up in an attempt to "breast the tape," in the manner portrayed in all the sports drawings by people who don't understand the science of running. As a matter of fact the action of throwing up the arms is induced by funking the tape; nor is it correct or advantageous to jump at the tape in one's final effort. No! The way to finish is with the head and shoulders well thrust forward straight to the front, and the body right up on the toes, shoulders, arms, and legs acting as throughout; concentrate all the attention on dashing through the tape without breaking the rhythm of the action which has prevailed throughout.

Before coming to the question of starting, which applies to practically all the races, I want to say a particular word as to the breathing necessities in a "hundred dash"; and this, perhaps, is the most difficult thing for the novice to learn. One frequently hears statements about men who run through the whole hundred yards on one breath; this undoubtedly has been, and is still, done; but I think the best method is to take a deep breath when you are told to "Get set!" then, as the pistol cracks, let the air out again and take a good breath as your first stride forward is made. This first intake should last you, at any rate, half-way, and, if possible, for sixty yards, where another breath is taken. But great care must be taken that as the air comes into the lungs for the second time the speed is increased, for it is at this point that you take in the fresh supply to enable you to increase the pace for the forty-yard dash into the winning-post.

And now as to the start. There can, of course, be no question that the crouching position (already briefly described in my article on hurdling) is the only admissible one for the short-distance races. When you come out for any race whatsoever always wear a dressing-gown or long overcoat, because it is of vital importance to keep warm right up to the very moment of starting. On reaching the hundred path, find out which are your strings, and set quietly to work to arrange your holes in the cinder-path or grass track. First place your leading foot about four inches behind the line on which the fingers rest; the back foot is placed so that when the knee rests on the

* "Olympian Field Events." (Geo. Newnes, Ltd., London.) 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

ground (in the "on your marks" position) it is almost level with the instep of the front foot. You now have the position of your feet, and must cut your holes. For turf, the best instrument is a small garden trowel. The front hole need only be deep enough to give a grip to the spikes; but the back one should be fairly deep at the back, sloping up to the front with a good firm back wall to push off against. Having cut your holes, it is now absolutely essential that two or three trial starts shall be made to ensure that they are perfectly firm and comfortable to the feet; also these trial runs are good in that they limber one up and set the blood flowing.

At the order from the starter "on your marks," get down with your fingers resting on the scratch line, the left (or right) foot advanced, and the knee of the back leg resting on the path about level with the instep of the front foot. The next order will be "get set"; the body is then raised and poised well forward, the weight resting principally upon the arms and front leg; the back leg is reserved for pushing off against the back hole, although some of the push must come from the other leg as well. In the proper "set" position the back and head should be in one and the same straight line parallel with the ground; the position must not be cramped, nor must the head be pressed up.

Before describing the actual start I would here give you what may be considered "an essential tip." If you are working all through your training under the master who will act as starter on the day of the school sports, be careful to watch him starting other boys, and *get into the habit of counting evenly between the time he tells you to "get set" and the firing of the pistol.* If you find he is pretty regular, you can then judge the exact fraction of a second after the "get set" at which the pistol will be fired, and so can get away absolutely with the report; and in the meantime you must have collected all your energies for the starting effort.

On the report of the starter's pistol do not jerk the body into an upright position and commence running; but fling yourself forward, running right on the slant and gradually letting the body come up to the true sprinting position which has already been described.

As the pistol cracks and the body is flung forward (assuming the right foot was behind), the athlete pushes off strongly from his right foot, which passes through to the front in a straight line, and is brought to the ground again as quickly as possible. As the right leg comes through to the front so the left arm is flung up and slightly across in front of the body to the right, while the right arm is flung up high behind the body. In the first few yards the

Photo, Sport & General.]

R. E. Walker, the famous sprinter, winning the 100 yards at Stamford Bridge.

strides will be rather short, and it is at this stage that the arm-work is absolutely vital, for the power with which the arms are worked adds materially to the speed with which the start is made, and the athlete gets into his running.

For the hundred yards man short thirty-yard dashes form an important part of the training, as they develop both action and speed, while longer runs up to one hundred and thirty yards should be used to develop a strong finish.

In training for running the "two-twenty" work will go on right up to three or four hundred yards, and the athlete should run every day; sometimes a good deal, other days only just enough to keep him lively according to his schedule. At the commencement of the training the athlete may run about sixty yards, starting gently, working up a fine burst of speed, and then slowing gradually down until he is at length able to break into a walk. The quarter-mile race is always a source of debate as to whether it should really be considered a sprint or a middle-distance event. In my opinion it is beyond the little sprinters such as Applegarth and Walker; but for the "hefty" species to which Ramsdell, Halswell, and Patterson belong I think it is well within their scope.

Frequently, a man who cannot become a great man at the short distances because he lacks that "devil" which puts him into action in a flash, becomes a great quarter-miler because he has the grit and staying power to stay the longer distance when travelling at the greatest pace of which he is capable the whole way through.

Now there are two ways of running a "quarter"; one is to nip off your mark with the pistol, and to put in all your running so that you take the lead and keep it, relying on a burst of speed to carry you to victory as soon as you are challenged; the other method is to get off as best you can, and lie comfortably well up to your field, taking no notice of anyone, but keeping yourself at top pressure all the way, and relying only on the best speed of which you are capable to win you the honours. On the whole, I am in favour of the second method of showing your best all the way rather than getting ahead and then waiting for the other man's challenge to draw you out, for there is always the risk that he may have the whip-hand of you in the matter of finishing speed. However, I have mentioned both methods; one will suit one class of men and one another. One thing to remember if you do get left at the start is that you must not get flustered and try immediately to get on terms with the leaders, but rather catch your field gradually, and reserve your great effort for the final run in on the home straight; and never try to pass on a bend, it is far easier to do so in the straight.

All that has already been said as to body carriage must be borne in mind here; and one tip which may be useful is to learn to vary the length of the stride during the race, as by this means a certain amount of rest is obtained without loss of speed, and energy is stored up for the final finish. And there is also just this point as regards body carriage: that it is rather more upright than when running anything up to 300yds. In the early stages of training work up gradually, but when you are more or less reaching your best form, frequent runs must be made against the stop-watch to enable you to judge of your own capabilities. The breathing must be perfectly natural throughout, and it must be remembered that the speed is to be increased as a breath is taken, or the runner may let himself loosen out, and so lose control of his leg-action. Both at school and other sports I have frequently seen men fall down in an apparently exhausted condition at the end of a quarter-mile race. Now this is totally unnecessary, and greatly to their discredit, for it simply goes to prove that they have not paid sufficient attention to their training so that they might be able to endure the strain; for it is not sufficient for a man to train at 440yds., he must take runs up to 600yds. in order that he may acquire staying-power. Good brisk walks at about four and a half miles an hour up to five or six miles will also greatly add to the powers of endurance.

We now come to the half-mile race, and here judgment and track tactics begin to enter into matters more than a little, and endurance becomes a more vital factor than even in the quarter.

There is a clear line of demarcation between the 440yds. and 880yds. men: the former may belong to the sprinters class, but go no farther; whereas your good half-miler is usually good at the mile as well. Now it is a most curious thing that although the half and the mile seem to require similar training, yet the man who is good at the 880yds. is rarely good at the 440yds.; though in point of fact these two races are much more closely allied than are the former and the mile.

The body carriage for both the half and the

mile is similar to that when walking; the arms are carried low and loosely, slightly bent at the elbow, and swinging diagonally across the body. As in the 440yds. so in the half and the mile, the athlete may from time to time lengthen out his stride to rest his limbs, changing back to short, sharp striding; the legs should be well under the body. It is of the most vital importance that the athlete should learn to judge pace, and to be able to gauge the rate at which he is travelling, as by so doing he will be able to regulate his tactics throughout the race. For the schoolboy to appreciate what a really strenuous business half-mile running has nowadays become one has only to point out that the first quarter is frequently run in about 52secs. or 53secs, for him to realise that the aspirant to first-class honours must indeed have a pretty turn of speed.

When one comes to speak of the mile one's thoughts naturally turn to the Oxford University A.C. President, A. N. S Jackson, who thrilled the whole world in 1912 by winning the 1,500 mètres race at the Olympic Games in such brilliant style from the world's record holder, J. Paul Jones, of Cornell University, America.

Jackson is undoubtedly one of the greatest milers the world has ever seen, and he won his race at Stockholm purely and simply by using his brain and also by running to a schedule; by which I mean, if you would become a good miler, learn your own capabilities, as well as gauging those of your opponent, and then make up your mind as to how you are going to run your race before you go on to the track, and work to a time schedule.

It will be found that the first quarter in a mile is usually travelled at the greatest speed, while the third quarter is the one in which the gruelling is most severely felt; and then it is as well to try to think that although you may be feeling pretty nearly "all in" the other fellows are probably feeling a jolly sight worse.

Particular attention should be paid to this third quarter; for then everyone's faculties are on the alert, watching for someone to take the lead. And here it is that the skilful, thoughtful runner shows up to the best advantage. Most mile races are won in this third quarter, for when the bell goes for the last lap generalship is usually done with and everyone settles down to go all out for victory.

Throughout this article I have carefully avoided giving any detailed description of training for the track events, as, by the time this appears in print, such advice would be useless to you from lack of time; therefore I have confined myself to instructions in those essential arts in running which may be quickly acquired, and which mean just the difference between success and failure. But here I would say for your future guidance that the only way to learn to become a distance runner is to keep on running, and to do plenty of it; and included in the training should be plenty of sprinting at the shorter distances as well as runs at longer distances than a mile.

Above all, run loosely; don't make your stride so long that you lose control of your legs; but at the same time let them swing out loosely, well out from the hips; while all the parts of the body should work smoothly and harmoniously. If the first three-quarters of the race be run with this easy, loping gait—even if they have been run through at such high speed that the runner feels "all in"—yet if he has saved himself a little in the third quarter he may put in his last quarter at a terrific pace; if he can change his gait, and from running on the back half of the front part of the shoe, he will get up on to his toes, using his arms and hips to aid his running, he will bring an entirely new set of muscles into play. This sounds easy, but is very difficult of accomplishment, and only to be mastered after much careful practice and concentrated thought.

Points to be carefully remembered for sports day, no matter what the events for which you are entered:—

1. Make full use of flesh-gloves for rubbing the limbs, both before and after competition.
2. Always keep warm.
3. Try to keep your mind off your race until you actually go out for competition.

The LAST of HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell

SYNOPSIS OF OPENING INSTALMENT

At the beginning of the January term it is announced that the Captain of Kellcaster School is not returning, and the captaincy falls to Penn. The latter is the sixth member of his family to hold the position, and it had been a great disappointment to him that he was not elected to it last term. Unlike his five brothers, he is not brilliant at sport, and the more thoughtful Kellcastrians wonder whether he will be equal to the task of maintaining his newly acquired authority.

Among the new boys is an eighteen-year-old American named Maxon Rope, whom Penn discovers teaching the juniors baseball when they should be playing football. Rope is defiant when Penn informs him that he must conform to certain unwritten school rules. The American collects a few juniors, including Gage and Ellis, known as the Persian Lambs, sows in them the seeds of rebellion against school traditions, and proposes that they form themselves into a league to strike for the "rights" of juniors, calling themselves the Birds of Freedom.

CHAPTER V

THE BIRDS OF FREEDOM FLAP THEIR WINGS—

"BOYS, close your books," bade Mr. Fellowes. "And now, Ellis, you will tell us the provisions of the Statute of Mortmain."

Pleasantly engrossed in selecting English elevens for the coming season — elevens in which his name and that of Gage had figured alternately as captain—Ellis had no idea that it was three o'clock already. When the order to close books disturbed him he had been debating the claims of Jessop and George Hirst for the last place, and, rather afraid that he must include them both, he was wondering if that meant dropping Gage. Mr. Fellowes' command recalled him with a jerk.

"Sir! The statue of Mortmain!" he said, in a tone of faint reproach. "You *did* say the statue of Mortmain, sir!"

"Stat-ute," corrected Mr. Fellowes.

His victim glanced about for inspiration. He could feel the bench vibrating with the impatience of Simpson Minor, who bobbed upon it up and down in zeal to release hot streams of information. But Gage, to whom Ellis naturally looked, sat prim and horribly innocent, aware that the eye of Mr. Fellowes held him.

"The statute of Mortmain, sir," repeated Ellis. "Yes, sir."

"Well, boy?"

"I'm thinking, sir."

"But you've only just this minute been reading about it?"

"Yes, sir. A dead hand, sir!"

Ellis shot this out triumphantly, with the air of one who lights on a discovery. He knew he'd hit the mark when Simpson Minor sank back in disappointment.

"Good," smiled Mr. Fellowes. "The dead hand. Yes, Ellis?"

"Yes, sir," Ellis said emphatically, with answering smile. "The dead hand, sir."

"But that scarcely explains the statute, Ellis. Called Mortmain from *in mortuâ manu*, in a dead hand—so far so good, Ellis. But now—does not the title suggest the purport of the law? Think, Ellis!"

"The what, sir, of it—please?" asked Ellis.

"The purport—significance, intention, meaning. What did it enact?"

Ellis glanced round desperately. Mr. Fellowes' eye had left Gage for a moment, and he distinctly saw his friend's lips framed for his assistance. So far as he could read them the words that Gage was signalling were *land* and *church*.

He caught at this clue gratefully.

"Oh, yes, sir," he broke out, as if the only person at fault was Mr. Fellowes for putting his question so obscurely. "Of course, sir. You mean what was the statue all about, sir. The land, sir; and the church."

"Good, Ellis! Now we get to it."

"Yes, sir," Ellis answered. "Yes, sir."

"But what about the land and church, Ellis?"

Simpson Minor nudged him. "Obsolete," he whispered.

"Sir," said Ellis, brightly, "they were obsolete."

This brought the stooping figure of their master to his feet, and set the Third Form staring. Never before had they heard Ellis use a word like that. They kindled happily, and prayed that this inquiry might absorb the hour.

Cried Mr. Fellowes: "Whatever do you mean, Ellis?"

"The land and church, sir," repeated Ellis, stoutly. "They were obsolete."

"And what does obsolete mean?" asked Mr. Fellowes.

Ellis hesitated, and stammered something quite inaudible. He succeeded no better under pressure.

Mr. Fellowes raised his hand for attention, while his gentle eyes surveyed Ellis with amusement. He was confident that this young gentleman's acquaintance with his mother tongue would scarcely extend to a precise definition of the term. And Mr. Fellowes had two weaknesses: the first a dread of draughts, the second a passion for the nicety of language. Of eclectic literary taste, he liked little better than to discourse to his boys on etymology, on the derivation of words, on their proper usage, and their vulgar misuse.

To his mind it was desirable enough that his boys should be acquainted with the defunct provisions of a dead king's statute. But it was a hundredfold more necessary that they should know their living language. Mr. Fellowes had never been a pedant.

"Well, Ellis," he reiterated; "obsolete. What is anything obsolete?"

The Third settled itself restfully, and recognised with gratitude that the rest of the afternoon was unlikely to be taxed by English history. A few who had earnestly worked up the chapter, began to regret an effort that now seemed wasted, and the Maggot returned to a stanza in his big "Ode to the Birds of Freedom," in which he had been hung up for a rhyme to *Maxon Rope*.

In this dilemma Gage conveyed another lip message to his harassed chum.

"Obsolete, sir?" responded Ellis. "Something out of date, sir!"

Here was a surprise for Mr. Fellowes. He had misjudged Ellis, it appeared. The boy knew more than he had given him credit for!

"Very good," he answered, and proceeded to elaborate. "Something old-fashioned, antiquated, fallen into disuse. Derived from, Ellis?"

Silence from Ellis, and a pleasant smile.

"Derived from, any of you boys?"

Dead silence from the pundits of Form Three

"From the Latin *obsoletus*," said Mr. Fellowes, cheerfully. "Now, Ellis, give us an example."

"An example, sir—of what, sir?"

"Of something obsolete."

"The church and land, sir," answered Ellis, promptly.

Mr. Fellowes laughed outright.

"Ah, I thought you weren't quite sure of it. No, that won't do, Ellis. Try again."

Now from their inception on that bleak afternoon a month before the Birds of Freedom had not yet flown into the open. Stealthily mooted among the more turbulent and adventurous spirits in the Lower School, the idea had made some headway, and—as Gage had mixed his metaphors to put it—although the fledgelings had no scalps in their wigwams yet they would soon be strong enough to try their wings. Only the caution of Maxon Rope restrained them.

Rope, the parent bird, was going warily. His brood must wait, he had enjoined them, for a fitting opportunity. They must not assert themselves too soon.

But with the gaze of Mr. Fellowes on him; with Form Three watching for his downfall, and baffled for an example to express his meaning—in this ill moment something prompted Ellis to draw upon the only stores in his possession. Obsolete! That was the very word that Maxon Rope had used at the last meeting of the Birds in slating some school customs! Here was the example he was searching for, at his tongue's tip!

"Well, Ellis? Try again. Tell me something obsolete?"

Ellis cleared his throat, sat up, and squared his elbows, as became a Bird of Freedom about to flap its wings for the first time.

"Obsolete, sir," said he, quite slowly. "If you please, sir, the traditions of schools, you know, are obsolete."

A gasp broke from Mr. Fellowes, for this was the very last answer he might have expected. At first it beat him altogether. But next he thought he had the explanation; it confirmed only what he had suspected, namely, that Ellis had no glimmering of the meaning of the term. Mr. Fellowes smiled, and chuckled kindly.

"You silly boy," he smiled. "You're talking as a parrot does."

"Please, how?" asked Ellis, flushing.

"Parrots employ words they don't understand—long words, Ellis."

"But, sir!" exclaimed Ellis, too eager to mark how Gage was frowning and gesticulating. "Sir, many school traditions are absolutely out of date. They're too old to be any use. They suppress your individuality."

This was second hand, *via* Maxon Rope, but Mr. Fellowes could have no idea of that. A few of the Third, who belonged already to the Birds, recognised the jargon, and spread themselves in lively anticipation of a scene. For if there was one conservative in Kellcaster, jealous of its routine, place, and history, profoundly distrustful of anything which could be classed generically as "newfangled," it was the gentle-eyed, stooping sentimentalist who taught Form Three. You struck tradition at its heart if you assailed it in the hearing of Mr. Fellowes.

His voice assumed a new note, and his face was smooth no longer.

"Ellis, explain yourself," he commanded, curtly.

Ellis felt that he was challenged; that it had fallen on him to vindicate the principles of the league; to offer himself perhaps as its first martyr.

"What I mean is, sir," he faltered—"well, too much tradition isn't good for you." He began to draw again on Maxon Rope. "Schools get into a rut, sir, and little chaps get crushed by stupid systems. And some of us men, sir, have made our minds up——"

He stopped dead in confusion. For at last he had caught sight of Gage, shaking his head and making other gestures of vehement disapproval. He remembered, just in time, that he had all but said too much and disclosed the existence of the Birds. He recalled that all the leaguers were pledged to keep strict secrecy.

"Some of you have made your minds up," Mr. Fellowes was repeating with marked coldness; "how made your minds up, Ellis? To what, pray?"

"The statue of Mortmain, sir——" Ellis began, artlessly; but Mr. Fellowes was not to be switched off.

"Oh, no, no!" he interrupted. "You must tell me first, Ellis, what you mean by passing such extraordinary strictures on tradition. Come, what did you mean exactly?"

But help was near at hand. It came from Gage, who, with remarkable presence of mind, sprang up in his place that instant, waving a somewhat inky hand.

"Please, sir!" he was crying. "Please, sir!"

"Well?" said Mr. Fellowes, testily.

"Please, sir, there's an awful draught."

"A draught, Gage?"

"Yes, sir. From that window just behind me, sir!"

The afternoon was close for February, and all the windows in the class-room had been opened. Gage was speaking with his coat collar turned up.

"I don't feel it," remarked Mr. Fellowes.

"But we men on this form do, sir; it's blowing down our necks."

"I believe I'm getting a stiff neck, sir," cried Thornborrow, nudged by Gage.

"Then shut the window," Mr. Fellowes snapped.

But this (apparently) was easier said than done.

The windows of Kellcaster are not of the modern sash-and-case variety. In the dormitories, the long schoolroom, and the class-rooms they are Gothic, and the lower half of the glass is protected by strong wire guards, while the upper portion swings inwards on a cord hitched to a cleat-hook on the wall. To open the window you unhitch the cord and pull. To shut it, you reverse the operation.

Gage jumped up readily, and untwisting the cord he tugged at it. The window refused to budge. He tugged a second time and the cord snapped in his hand. He grasped a fragment; the rest hung dangling out of reach.

The Third was immediately prolific in suggestion. Moorgate inquired if he should fetch some steps. Willett was anxious for permission to clamber up the desks. While Ellis, relieved from his embarrassment, seized the opportunity to extract from Simpson Minor some authentic details about the wretched Mortmain.

"Quick!" he whispered. "I must switch the old boy back to it."

But Mr. Fellowes must see that window shut ere they proceeded. "Yes, Moorgate, you had better fetch the steps," he said, and while the Maggot hied upon his quest they moved the desks aside to make a place for them.

The steps brought and put into position, Willett

volunteered to mount them. This was rather resented by the Maggot, who deemed it his reward for bringing them, and when their claims had been somewhat noisily adjusted, Willett ascended with the frayed piece of cord, and tied it to the dangling portion. Then he tugged again.

The result of this was that the knot parted, and Willett fell backwards with a crash. His descent was facilitated by Moorgate, ostensibly holding the steps for him, in reality only waiting to jerk them as the climber should descend.

In full enjoyment of the interlude, and determined to prolong it, the Third were hailing Willett's downfall with shouts and whoops, when of a sudden the door opened and everybody, except Moorgate, stole back to his place. Moorgate, with his back turned to the door, stood grinning for a moment by the steps, until, conscious of the awful hush about him, he turned round sharply. Then his jaw dropped.

Those who have been at Kellcaster with the Reverend John Bullock will tell you that he was the tenderest, warmest friend whom many of them have had the good fortune to encounter. But all the while, they will assure you, there was a secret about his character which no one could explain but which everybody felt. Much as he was in touch with the school life, and keenly as he entered into its enthusiasms and games, he possessed to the highest possible degree the gift of discipline. He commanded a most instant and reverent respect, and nothing in the world was less to be conceived than anything in the nature of a familiarity with him.

Potent and expressive was the veneration which Pater Bovo instilled. Who of all who came under his sway will forget, for instance, how every boy sprang to his feet and every sense was strained to mute attention whenever he appeared? His entrance into a room was sufficient without any word to reduce to absolute silence the noisiest and largest class.

It was so now. When the Third saw that large and corpulent figure framed in the doorway, when they glimpsed that fine head, with its white beard below the long and shaven upper lip, an instant and intense hush fell upon them. The few who had been sitting rose; the many who were already on their feet were stiffened into the stoniest attention. The whole class might have been turned suddenly to marble; and no one dared to speak.

There were moments when the Head would give a glimpse of the quick temper which he was known to possess. His eyes, fired with righteous indignation, were then truly alarming. Such moments, however, were very rare; for which reason they were remembered, contributing not a little to the wholesome awe which he inspired.

The Third were straining now for his first word. It would warn them if their hubbub had aroused his wrath.

Instead, it eased their fears. Pater Bovo was addressing them in those light tones of rebuke which did not, they recognised, portend the worst.

"English history," he said, with a quiet glance at Mr. Fellowes; "English history is not a study that should be attended by a tumult. What's all this noise about?"

Mr. Fellowes would have spoken, but Pater Bovo shook his head.

"Gage," he repeated, "what is this noise about?"

"Sir, it is my fault," Gage answered, tremulously. "I broke the window-cord."

"And who was trying to mend it?"

"Sir, I was," confessed Willett.

"And Moorgate—you were helping with the steps?"

The Maggot stammered an affirmative.

Advancing into the room, Pater Bovo beckoned the three to him. He had not the slightest doubt that they were the authors of the mischief, and that their consideration for the window had been designed to provide amusement rather than exclude a draught. Mr. Fellowes, he reflected, allowed the Third to get a little out of hand at times.

Pater Bovo cherished his own views on punishment. His methods were often singular, but never ineffective. Impositions, he maintained, ruined a boy's writing and robbed him of fresh air. Boys, he added, needed the fresh air.

Now, as he scanned them one by one, he was recalling how the three criminals before him loved nothing better than to ramble free and unfettered in the woods on Saturdays before call-over. It was very likely, he thought, that they had planned such an excursion for next Saturday.

"Gage," he said, "and you two, Moorgate and Willett, you seem, if I judge rightly, quite interested in windows. Now two miles or so from here, along the Dunstan road—in the opposite direction to the woods, I may remind you—there is a nice new building just erected. I noticed it when I was driving yesterday. A nice, new, red-brick building on the Dunstan Road, Gage."

"Yes, sir," Gage murmured, and wondered what was coming.

THE LAST OF HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

"On Saturday, immediately after dinner, you three will walk sharply to that building. You will keep upon the high road all the way. You will not deflect from it. And you will return not later than half-past three, when you will report to me the style in which the windows are constructed. You will describe the windows to me, also the colour of the paint upon the woodwork. You will also tell me what the architecture is. Whether Early English, the Decorated, or the Perpendicular. You had better inform yourselves a little on the salient features of these styles before you start. You will describe all accurately. You understand?"

"Yes, sir," three sheepish voices promised.

Pater Bovo departed, with grave mien and twinkling eye. But the Third displayed remarkable docility for the rest of that afternoon,

They hailed Willett's downfall with shouts and whoops, which were hushed suddenly as the door opened and the head master entered the class-room.

though three were bitterly regretting the ruin of a pleasant excursion to Dene Wood, which they had projected for the day after to-morrow.

"And instead," Gage groaned to his fellow-sufferers afterwards, "we've got to swot out to a beastly red-brick barn!"

"And keep upon the high-road all the way!" moaned Willett.

"And come back and describe it," gasped the Maggot. "A beastly red-brick barn."

"A what?" said Ellis, sympathetically. "A barn?"

"A barn," repeated Gage. "I saw it the other day. A silly barn!"

And the dejection on their faces proved conclusively that Pater Bovo's methods, if quaint, were quite effective.

CHAPTER VI

—AND FLY!

"SO, sonnie, you flapped your wings. Yes, after what you had the sand to tell old Fellowes we can agree that the Birds of Freedom have flapped their wings."

"Rath—er!" said Ellis, proudly.

"And now we'll get a move on. We'll try a flight."

It was a few days after the episode in the Third Form, which Rope, their president and founder (the P. and F. they styled him in their jargon) was discussing with his lieutenants, the Persian lambs.

"Yes, we've flapped our wings," he repeated. "We've broken the ice."

Rather cool, thought Ellis, of Rope to talk as if *he* had done it. As the ice-breaker, Ellis felt that he might have been applauded, and it was on his tongue's tip to remind their P. and F. that *he* had not yet hazarded *his* person in the freedom's cause, and that although the term was one month old already the Birds had nothing to show for themselves as yet except this one and scanty lock from the scalp of that gentle sentimentalist, Mr. Fellowes. But, looking up, he caught Rope's eyes, and knew that Rope knew exactly what was passing through his mind. And Rope had a way with him that quickly quelled incipient mutiny. So Ellis thought better of it—and digressed.

"It's a nuisance," he exclaimed, "that we can't find anywhere to meet. Now, Rope, if you only had a study——"

"Which I haven't," interjected the P. and F.

"But next term," said Ellis, consolingly, "you will have. And then the league can always meet there, don't you know. That will be ripping—Rope!"

"Just topping!" seconded Gage.

Rope summoned up the hastiest of smiles.

"Oh, sure," he murmured, "but we needn't wait for that."

"What—you have found somewhere?" they both exclaimed together.

Rope nodded. "Yes," he said.

"Where is it?"

He bent down, and disclosed it in a whisper.

"But," he concluded, fingering his moustache, "tell the other fellows quietly; see it doesn't leak out."

And now the eyes of the Persian lambs were dancing. Then after all their P. and F. had not been wasting his time. He had found the last place in the world a fellow could think of where the Birds could hold their meetings unmolested.

"And now we're going to hustle," he went on. "Next Saturday's the first Saturday of the month——"

"Well?"

"All right. Let me go on. Next Saturday's the first Saturday in the month?"

"Yes; so you've said already, Rope."

"And therefore, so they tell me, it's guest night at the debating society. You kids will have the privilege of attending."

"Thanks frightfully!" drawled Gage, with much disdain. "Thanks frightfully for nothing, Rope. Who wants to go to a beastly old debate?"

"But listen," Rope commanded, and continued in a quiet undertone, till the Persian lambs began to look less comfortable.

"But I say——" Gage murmured, dubiously at last. And there he stopped, mutely regarding Ellis.

Rope shrugged his shoulders, laughing at them.

"But you agreed to make things hum," he said.

"But I say!" repeated Ellis, and stared at Gage.

"Well, if you fellows funk it, out with it!"

Of course, Rope knew his Persian lambs, and to suggest to their faces that they "funked" anything was immediately to rouse them to its attempt. And this ordained, if any of the Birds felt misgivings when they learned the nature of the first blow they were to strike for freedom, they certainly knew better than to evince their qualms before the energetic Gage and Ellis. But the diffident were encouraged, maybe, by the reflection that in numbers safety lies. It is so much easier to

revolt in company than to dare to be a Daniel on "one's own."

Moreover, their P. and F. had promised to bear the brunt.

On guest nights in the school debating society, visitors in the shape of the junior school are admitted on the conclusion of private business. But it is no good pretending that as soon as the door is opened an eager flock of visitors crushes in. It is idle to assert that they have waited in a long queue down the corridor, impatient for the privilege of entering. They have not been fretting, jostling, struggling for places.

Fling open the door, and you can count your visitors from the Junior School on the fingers of one hand. And these present themselves sheepishly; they slink, smirking, to the benches set apart for them at the bottom of the big room by the cupboards. And when they get there they look as if they'd rather be outside again.

No; the smaller fry has never *burned* exactly to exercise its privilege on guest nights.

To-night the subject for debate was "Ghosts." A hoary and perennial favourite this, the statutory opportunity for the clowns. But Lynge, who was leading against the resolution, was taking himself quite seriously, and looking forward to the manner in which by cold and searching rationalism he would demolish Carter, the champion of the spectres and the spooks. Carter had been in agonies all day, committing his eloquent oration to heart.

At the bottom of the Sixth Form benches Rope reclined; and Penn—by virtue of his office, president—was struck, while Musgrave the secretary was reading the minutes, by something unfamiliar in Rope's appearance. Somehow or other he looked different to-night: his sallow face seemed positively pale, and he appeared self-conscious. Penn had never seen Rope look self-conscious before, and he could not take his eyes off him.

Musgrave finished, and when Penn had put the minutes for confirmation, and declared the meeting open for private business, he sat down, and Westinghouse jumped up to urge some alteration in the form of future procedure. But all the time that he was speaking, Penn found his gaze on Rope again, and all at once he realised what it was. He saw why Rope looked pale instead of sallow. The fellow was wearing a red tie!

A vivid scarlet, a most aggressive tie, that hurt Penn's eyes and set his teeth on edge. An *outre*, horrible apparel, yet nothing which Carter or Westinghouse, for instance, might not have worn if they had sufficient nerve for it. A vicious and appalling article on Rope!

But another eye had marked it before Penn's, and no sooner had Westinghouse sat down than Lynge had risen with his finest air.

"Mr. Chairman!" he exclaimed. "Upon a point of order!"

Penn nodded.

"There is a member present in a coloured tie."

"More than one," Penn smiled, with a glance at Lynge's blue one.

"But a member with a hideous red tie, sir!"

"Yes, yes," said Penn. "I've seen it."

"And as that member," Lynge went on, severely, "only joined the school this term he has no right to wear a coloured tie. He should wear a black one. A black one, sir."

Again Penn nodded.

"Yes," he said, "he should."

"Then I move, Mr. Chairman, that he be removed from the house."

"And I second that," said Westinghouse, while Lynge stood pointing an accusing finger at Rope.

But the finger was not needed, for who could fail to recognise the offender? They glared at Rope. It was like his uncommon cheek, they told each other, to flaunt his outrage of the school convention in the face of the debating society of all places! Just like his most uncommon impudence! They hoped that Penn would smite him as he should be smitten. And here they turned to stare at Penn.

For he, to their amazement and dismay, had not immediately smitten the offender. But while the latter, smiling queerly, sat languid and unmoved through the storm he was provoking, Penn stood in apparent hesitation. Instead of calling the house to order, he seemed waiting for the murmurs to subside. But he frowned when Lynge jumped up again impatiently.

"It has been moved and seconded, Mr. Chairman, that Rope do be removed. I ask you to put my motion to the meeting." And Lynge sat down, the image of affronted dignity.

Recalling what had passed between them after the baseball incident, Penn felt no doubt whatsoever that Rope's public adoption of the crimson tie was a calculated impertinence to himself. But, as his habit was, while the others had been fuming he had been thinking. And now it galled him to conclude that in justice he could not fall there and then on Rope.

His nostrils twitched and his blue eyes hardened, but otherwise his demeanour betrayed nothing of his feelings. His tones were very formal in reply to Lynge.

"I am sorry," he said, "that I cannot put your motion. Agreed that a new boy is forbidden a coloured tie, yet as a member of the society he has certain privileges while the society is in debate. No member"—Penn paused emphatically upon the word—"no member in the course of a debate can be expelled for anything except a breach of the rules——"

"I submit that his red tie *is* a breach of the rules," cried Lynge.

"And I must rule that it is not," Penn answered. "There is nothing in the society's regulations against the wearing of a coloured tie by members. So I cannot put your motion."

Here was a new point, and a nice one. Undoubtedly it had never been raised before. But the more the members discussed it in undertones the more they saw that Penn's ruling was right. So long as the house was sitting in debate, so long would Rope be protected by his membership in his violation of the law that existed. To this extent he was, in fact, in sanctuary.

And Penn, as he watched Rope's quiet, measured smile, felt certain that he had previously ascertained this.

But Lynge was all for arguing the point. "Mr. Chairman, I don't agree——" he was beginning, when Penn called him to order.

"I have given the house my ruling," he said, coldly. "But I am willing"—he paused and caught Rope's eye—"to allow the offending member an opportunity to apologise."

With a low laugh the American shook his head. Then he tilted up his chin, and stared with the greatest composure at the ceiling.

But Lynge was smarting under Penn's rebuke, and now the culprit's blank defiance proved the straw that broke the back of his restraint. Resentment mastering him, he jumped to his feet again.

"Then, Mr. Chairman, all I can say is this," he cried, "Rope wouldn't have escaped on a silly quibble——"

"Order! Order!" Musgrave called, excitedly.

But Lynge was not to be denied.

"Rope wouldn't have escaped on a quibble, Mr. Chairman, if Norton had been sitting where you sit!"

Directly he had said it he was sorry, and, blushing, he tried to explain the words away. But good sense came too late; the mischief had been done. For, encouraged by the lead from such a quarter, the few who had resented Penn's promotion and the apparent indifference with which he had accepted it, exclaimed vociferously that Lynge was right—that Norton would never have tolerated Rope's cheek! And others cried, "Hear, hear!" some meaningly, some for nothing but the prospect of a rag.

Penn rapped upon the table, and silenced them. And then, in a manner that ignored Lynge utterly, he inquired if there were any further private business.

"Then that," he went on, after a pause in which nobody came forward, "concludes the private business before the meeting." He stooped to take the agenda sheet from Musgrave. "I call upon Carter to open the debate: 'That this house believes in ghosts.' But first, the visitors may be admitted."

And he sat down with a nod to the member nearest the door, who rose and flung it open.

Then he popped his head into the corridor, and drew it back with an exclamation of amazement.

"My aunt!" he ejaculated in a voice that all could hear. "I'm blowed if all the junior school aren't rolling up!"

And so you might have very well supposed. His words were followed by the steady tramp of feet, and the society sat stupefied as, four abreast, its visitors marched in.

In orderly array they came, fifty-odd of them upon the lowest count, and, having filled their prescribed benches, overflowed the floor till every inch of space seemed full. "And still they come!" cried somebody.

And still they came, another score at least, while the officers and members sat amazed, until quite certain that such cohorts had not been attracted by the mere desire to hear their dialectics they grew suspicious that something was in the wind. From one to the other this suspicion passed till the atmosphere was charged with it. Something extraordinary was going to happen. But what? For the invaders were quiet and decorous.

And then it did happen. But not till everyone was squeezed in somehow, and at the moment when Penn was signalling to close the door. A titter from those nearest was the first sign; next noisy exclamations, and last a hush. A belated band of visitors had entered.

They stole in semi-guiltily, their faces making the queerest panorama of expression. Some were trying to look valiant, some did not know

where to look, some smirked foolishly, and all were rather frightened.

And they had reason to be.

At their head marched Gage and Ellis, but not the Gage and Ellis who had sat to supper. Corporeally, of course, the same; but in attire how manifest the difference! For the Persian lambs were clad in football knickers, beneath which they displayed bare legs; and while Gage had added a "no-side" shirt, Ellis was swathed tightly in a blue jersey and sweater. They smirked, pushing their way in.

Three abreast upon the heels of them appeared the Maggot, Willett, and Simpson Minor. A tie of blue and orange stripes, in which winked a sham diamond, adorned the poet; Willett grinned above a stuck-up collar, a dickey, and an Eton jacket; and a tail-coat many sizes too large flopped monstrously on the form of Simpson Minor. He edged in timidly, and his gait suggested that he was pricked on from behind.

Behind these standard bearers, as you might declare them, came a handful—Birds of Freedom all—who flaunted gross defiance of the rules of dress by ties of sundry hue and trousers turned high at the hem. And as the society stared at them it ceased to wonder why its visitors had flocked in scores to-night. They had come to witness this startling demonstration. They were here—to be in at the death.

One glance at Penn's eye and rigid manner would remove the phrase from the sphere of exaggeration. If this outrage, not only on the society's decorum but on the school's dress regulations also, was not likely to be something very nearly the annihilation of its perpetrators, Penn's eye as he regarded them belied him. Simpson caught that eye, and tried to flee. But pitiless hands held him.

The Persian lambs stood stoutly, watching Rope.

Rope had risen; but at a glance from Penn his neighbours pulled him down, and kept him powerless. Then Musgrave was seen slipping through to the door, and when he returned he was carrying three canes. Gage and Ellis nudged each other.

Penn called for silence; but he could have spared his breath, for the moment was too tense and exciting for words.

"In selecting this society," he observed, coldly, "as the place for their impertinence, our scarecrow visitors have created a precedent. I am going to create another one. Gage! Come up!"

He said no more, but his meaning was obvious. Never yet in the history of the debating society had anyone been executed while the house was sitting. Penn *was* creating a precedent, with a vengeance.

"By Jove!" Lynge broke the hush to murmur. "I didn't think he had it in him!"

Now the Persian lambs had been looking (sooner or later) for physical blows, but here was a blow of another kind as well. Quite expecting to be asked for an explanation, they had primed themselves with a defence to be delivered, so to speak, upon the scaffold; whence they might proclaim their martyrdom to dress reform. But a martyr not bidden to explain, but merely to "bend over," is robbed of his opportunity to shine.

It was mean of Penn, they thought, to guess their intention, and do them out of their chance. It was jolly mean!

Yet shall it be admitted that Gage, so far as he was enabled, did shine. For he accepted his eight strokes without wince or groan—with all the greater credit when we remember that, not anticipating such instant execution, he had omitted to pre-arm himself with exercise-books or towels. Then, mutely, he made place for Ellis, who shone also.

And after them the others. And though the Maggot exclaimed once, and Simpson Minor skipped and winced repeatedly, upon the whole the Birds must be congratulated on manliness in very trying circumstances. They departed with painful recollections of their visit to the society guest night.

When they had gone, Penn astonished the house by ordering all other visitors to go after them.

"As the privilege of guest night has been abused," he announced, "visitors will not be admitted again this term."

Lynge, the stickler for formality, sprang up at once.

"But, sir," he was beginning, "I protest——"

"I call on Carter to open the debate," Penn answered, with a cold composure, the most unmoved apparently of all. And this attitude he maintained through the debate; but though he seemed to be following the speeches his thoughts were far less pleasantly employed, as he cast about for the meaning of to-night's unparalleled events. It was not that he found these events difficult to account for. But how much might they *mean?*

The source from which they sprang, he knew, was Rope. It was preposterous and impossible to suppose that Gage and Ellis and their

confederate small fry had originated the demonstration, or engaged in it without some senior backing. They were catspaws pure and simple. Catspaws handled by Rope to scratch him.

As Penn mused thus he watched Rope closely; and the latter, who had been yawning and looking very bored since his suppression, sat up alertly now as the debate drew to its end. Indeed, Penn was on the point of calling on Carter to reply when he saw that the American had risen. As he coughed and cleared his throat, the house rallied its flagging interest for a maiden speech.

Rope eyed Penn queerly, as if he measured him, and his white teeth were very noticeable when he began.

"Mr. Chairman, I believe in ghosts," he said, "but not in the sort of ghost we've heard so much about to-night. The ghosts that do exist are not the spirits of dead persons, but the spirits of dead things. And they do a lot of harm."

He paused, and his face — so round and ingenuous in repose — had changed utterly: it looked sharp, the lines about the mouth were hard and ugly, and his white teeth gleamed.

"The ghosts that do exist," he went on, shrilly, "are the silly old dead things that make themselves into customs and traditions, and refuse to be shifted. Vapid, foolish old ideas, sir, that flourish most in public schools like this, and make themselves into a mill. And the mill grinds more reasonable individuals very small—or so, Mr. Chairman, I think I have been told."

No mistaking the significance with which he flung the last words out: hurled them, so to speak, at the face of Penn. His hearers, although they lacked the key to this, sat awkwardly and silent, conscious of the bitterness in the atmosphere.

But Lynge was on his feet again.

"Mr. Chairman! Upon a point of order!"

"What point?" inquired Penn.

"Is the member confining himself to the subject before the house? We're not here to discuss his sort of ghost."

"You're afraid of them!" sneered Rope.

This broke the spell upon the meeting. "Order! Order!" they shouted, appealing to the chair. "He's out of order, Mr. Chairman! Sit down, Rope!"

His features utterly expressionless, Penn thought hard before he answered. Sensing exactly what Rope aimed at, and divining from the challenge in his eye that the attack was directed against himself, he determined to give him a perfectly fair run. Rope had chosen his opportunity cleverly, he thought. He should enjoy it for as much as it was worth. And that, in Penn's view, was just *nil*.

A smaller mind than Penn's might have decided otherwise; and certainly his reply astonished many.

"The member has not addressed the house before. Some latitude is permissible in a maiden speech."

"But, sir!" protested Musgrave. "He is not speaking to the motion."

"The subject is ghosts," Penn answered. "I understand he speaks of ghosts." And he gestured Rope permission to proceed.

"Senseless traditions, senseless customs, senseless rules," Rope went on, quickly; "senseless little regulations against turning up trousers and wearing certain ties; senseless worship of this man or the other, just because he can boot a football a few yards farther than the rest——"

"Oh, oh, oh! Order!" from his audience, till Penn rose and stilled them.

"Yes," he said, unruffled. "Go on, please."

"And senseless officialdom of big fellows over little fellows; senseless lickings for breaking senseless rules——"

"Oh, oh!" cried Musgrave. "Order!"

"All these," Rope went on shrilly, "are ghosts, and evil ghosts, I say, that have got to be laid. They're apparitions from a past that's dead and buried." He paused, and leisurely surveyed the meeting. "And that, Mr. Chairman," he said, with emphasis, "is why I wear this crimson tie to-night, and why those other fellows appeared like guys. It was a protest, and I arranged it."

With a short laugh he resumed his seat, and everybody expected the captain to jump up and demolish him. But, instead, Penn echoed the laugh — dryly — and called on Carter.

"And I would ask the mover," he added, "to exclude from his reply any allusion to the nonsense of the member who spoke last."

It does credit to the tact of Carter that, amid the general disappointment created by Penn's attitude, he studiously avoided all reference to Rope. Yet the relief was general when he had finished, and the house divided with the usual result—an enormous majority against the spooks.

CHAPTER VII

" AMBITION . . . MADE OF STERNER STUFF '

THE affair of the debating society became a topic of hot discussion; but Kellcaster agreed that its new captain had dealt faithfully with the small fry " scarecrows." It was on his treatment of Rope that opinions differed.

The prefects, however, when at their weekly meeting following they raised the question of Rope's share in the outrage, and learned that Penn had not yet dropped upon him, stared at one another and asked why.

" But, skipper," protested Musgrave, " do you seriously mean that you haven't slaughtered the beast ? "

Penn raised his eyes from his tattered " Liddell and Scott," which he was fingering as a hint that he considered the meeting over.

" No, Musgrave, I haven't. I'll tell you why: It's recognised that a member of the debating society may express his views there; and I'm not going to slaughter a fellow for cal ing traditions ghosts."

" You know," growled Musgrave, " I didn't mean that exactly."

" Yes, I know," conceded Penn. " It's the whole tone of his performance you want him slain for. Well, I can't slay him for tone, or for bad taste. Catch him with a red tie out of debates, and any of you can haul him, and most welcome. But he was inside, and a member. He was safe."

" I'd jolly well have broken his back for him ! " cried Staples, who stood six feet, and looked quite capable of it. " And I vote the prefects have the bounder up."

" Oh, no," Penn answered, sharply; " I forbid that, Staples. Kellcaster is old enough to survive the ravings of a silly juggins like Rope. And now clear out, you men. The meeting's over."

Gage accepted his eight without a wince or groan.

But they were entertained by the discussion, and loth to leave. Perhaps Musgrave voiced their feelings when he growled:—

"Nowadays, skipper, we see nothing of you. You're a bit seclusive—what!"

"I'm sorry," Penn said, curtly. "Still, I'd much rather you trekked."

"But why?"

"Because I would."

So they went, protesting that they could not understand him. High-handed they agreed. Inclined to ride them rough-shod.

Alone again, Penn sighed; then stretched himself and turned thoughtfully to his books.

Though all his brothers had been men of mental parts, none had shed particular distinction upon their school except in the athletic sphere. The sixth and last of them, convinced that his physical achievements would never set the Thames on fire, had other aims. But these he was pursuing in secret.

There is a certain open scholarship at Cambridge which stands in a class almost of its own, and is regarded as one of the blue ribbons of the scholar's world. It is named reverently in common-rooms and places where the dons resort, and high quarters mark down him who wins it as a scholar likely to bring distinction to his University. In the meantime, he has brought laurels to his school.

When he had been defeated for the captaincy last July, Penn was swallowing his disappointment when this scholarship was mentioned on Speech Day in his hearing. There and then ambition had seized him. Could he beat his brothers' records after all, and achieve for Kellcaster more than any Penn had done?

So in the "vac.," and without a word to anybody, he had secured particulars, and returned in the September with a new object in life. But with the independence that was part of him he had decided to read hard till Christmas before confiding his intention to Pater Bovo even. He could tell the old gentleman in January, he reflected; when he would learn what chance, if any, he possessed. Till then, he must toil—and keep his counsel.

But he had soon found that he could not serve two masters. Committed to a course of secret reading, pursued most often under difficulties, his duties as second captain had suffered neglect; and, lacking the clue to this unlooked-for aberration, Kellcaster had concluded that he sulked. Even Pater Bovo, baffled by his vice-captain's reserve, and searching for a motive non-existent, had been driven to a not dissimilar conclusion.

But Penn had held on grimly. For the school's opinion he cared not a rap. For Pater Bovo—well, next term he would undeceive him.

When the prefects had gone, he turned resolutely to his books; but soon found it impossible to keep his mind on them. It kept straying to a point of view quite new.

Did he want now any longer to win that scholarship? A strange question; but one his thoughts reiterated.

Did he want it any longer? For the situation was changed; he had come into his own—he was captain now. His new responsibilities would cut into his secret reading; without hard reading he had no chance of success. Could he both do justice to the school and play the bookworm? This made two quandaries of one. Did he want the scholarship any longer? Could he put up a fight for it if he did?

At this his ingrained stubbornness rose armed. For four months, he reminded himself, he had led a hermit's life, jettisoning his popularity for that one end. His design had become a part of him. Must he take the surgeon's knife to it at last?

With a gesture of bewilderment he pushed his books aside, and immediately there rose before him the vision of a certain cocksure, impertinent American, who needed taming a little more than badly. This Rope bounder, he felt, would keep his hands quite full. This Rope brute introduced another factor that could scarce be overlooked.

A brave old veteran was Penn's "Liddell and Scott," the confidant of many heavy hours, the sole repository of an ambition now hanging in the balance.

"This Rope," said Penn, apostrophising it as was his habit, "is going to play Old Harry here unless I keep my thumb on him. I wonder if I'll have to let you rip!"

The lexicon stared mutely back at him. He closed it, and replaced it on his shelf. Then he straightened his tie, gave his hair a smooth—Penn was always precise in his appearance—and so went quickly down the corridor to the Head's.

"Well," said Pater Bovo, with a twinkle, "come to talk to me about ghosts and so forth, Penn?"

"Of course, you've heard that, sir. It was amusing."

"Yes, yes," smiled Pater Bovo, assured by Penn's reply that his captain had taken the incident precisely as he would have wished it taken.

"But I didn't come for that, sir," Penn went

on; and with a nervousness quite foreign he named the scholarship for which he had been grinding, and explained at detail what attention he had given to the special subjects.

"Last term," said Pater Bovo, having heard him through without a word, "you shut yourself up to devote your spare time to this, and annoyed some of the others by seeming too self-interested. This term you've been doing much the same, Penn. Of course, your object in flying at such high game is—ah—to go one better than your brothers. You are ambitious, Dennis, to excel them."

If Penn had not been at Kellcaster for seven years he might have marvelled to hear his mind read thus. But knowing Pater Bovo he felt no surprise.

"Sir, I knew you'd guess!" was all he answered.

"But I shan't tell anyone."

And rummaging among the litter on his table Pater Bovo found a sheet of notepaper, scribbled on it, and placed it in an envelope which he gave to Penn.

"There, you can run up to Cambridge for the week-end," he went on. "Get that mighty man, your brother, to find you a bedroom somewhere, and give that note to Mr. Beestock at Pembroke. He's a don there, and quite a good fellow. He'll ask you a few questions, put you through your paces—give you a trial gallop, so to speak, Penn—and you and I can go by his opinion on your chance."

"Sir, can I go on Saturday?" cried Penn, his blue eyes bright with joy.

"Oh, yes."

It was characteristic of the Head that he bestowed no praise on Penn's ambition, nor—as Mr. Fellowes might have done—did he air any sentiment regarding the glory its realisation would shed on Kellcaster. Teaching all beneath him to accept the highest standard in character and conduct as a matter of course, as the only standard that a gentleman could contemplate, Pater Bovo would no more have lauded anyone to his face for seeking to bring honour to his school than he would have claimed applause himself for the twenty tireless years he had bestowed there. To his idea it stood to reason that a Kellcaster man would do his best for Kellcaster. At school—and afterwards.

"One moment," he called, as Penn was going. "This new boy, Rope—what do you think of him?"

"I think, sir," Penn said, slowly, "that he wants some taming."

"Ah! just the word for it," smiled Pater Bovo. "Yes. Thank you, Penn."

CHAPTER VIII

AT CAMBRIDGE

WHEN Penn alighted on the longest platform in England (as rightly or wrongly some claim for that at Cambridge) he was feeling that the world was a fine place to be alive in. And presently, as he turned the corner into Panton Street, and glimpsed the spire of the Roman church where it nests in the green leaves, the spell that Cambridge conjures had begun to grip him. He went on slowly, his imagination touched, till he came to Trumpington Street, where the fresh water ripples by the kerb, and before him rose the low outline of Pembroke, grey and very restful.

A step now would take him to St. Saviour's, where Jim and lunch were waiting; but first he must assuage his eagerness to march down the "K.P." to gaze for the first time on the great chapel of King's (whereof nigh fifty years went to the building), on its green lawns that drop to water's edge, and on the vista of the leafy "backs" beyond. For a space, too, he paused before the Senate House, where the triposes are sat for, the threshing-floor where effort comes to winnowing, and where in easier moments gay dons in gorgeous robes will wend their way, attending congregation proudly.

Gazing at the austere front of this place, Penn wondered when the hour would strike for his own trial there, and how he would acquit himself.

The royal gate of Trinity, the "marvel of five hundred years," held him for some reverent minutes, and prompted an incursion to Old Court, most spacious quadrangle of all, until the sight of a buttery boy in white, who pecked his way across it with a tray of shining covers on his head, reminded the explorer that his own lunch waited. Hot-foot he retreated to St. Saviour's.

Halting at the lodge, he arrested the attention of a portly gentleman in middle age, whose features, comfortably smoothed and rounded, suggested long nights and unctuous fare, and accorded aptly with the handsome coat of velvet on his back. A moment of embarrassment ensued before Penn realised that he stood before the college porter.

"Mr. Penn's room, sir?" this dignitary replied. "In the second quad, sir. On Staircase E." He hailed a gyp approaching. "Tate, show this young gentleman to Mr. Penn's rooms," he commanded.

Penn wondered if it were possible to tip

him. He thought that he would like to; but he dared not.

His brother must have been upon the watch. For no sooner had the convoy neared his staircase than it was welcomed by a cap and gown which hurtled through a window, followed by genial objurgations, and laments that lunch was spoiling.

"And what have you come up for?" asked Jim, as they sat down to it. For Dennis had merely written to say that he was coming, without revealing why. "I've got to cut to footer directly afterwards."

"And I've got to call at Pembroke on a don."

"Of course," Jim answered, airily. "Later, you're holding a reception of the masters of the colleges. Then you'll give a garden party to the fellows!"

"No, honestly," said Dennis. "I'm really going to see a don, Jim."

"You're coming up to footer, side of me."

"I'm not. I'd love to. But I'm here to call on Mr. Beestock."

Old Penn opened his blue eyes.

"Beestock!" he repeated, with some awe. "Nobody beards Beestock, Den. He's the biggest bug in Christendom on Hebrew."

"What's he like?" asked Dennis.

"I've never spoken to him, Den. He's not my college. Besides, I wouldn't dare to. And you?"

So Dennis had to tell his tale again, which he did while Jim wound up on marmalade, and when it was finished his brother feelingly informed him that some people had more than their due share of nerve.

"The schol. may be an egg," he said; "but I wouldn't go through my paces before Beestock for—well, for anything."

"Not for your cricket blue?" laughed Dennis.

"Well—perhaps," was the reply.

So when Old Penn had changed and gone to footer, Dennis issued nervously to Pembroke, to know the worst and get it over. But his introduction to the first scholar in the University was not a bit as he had pictured it, nor as his brother had led him to apprehend.

Instead of a grave, crudite, and quite alarming being, he found his hand being shaken by a fragile, sad-eyed little man, whose voice was very light and musical. To the boy's amazement he darted off next moment to his gyp-room, where instantly the sound of tumbling water proclaimed the filling of a kettle, which the great scholar returned to put with his own hands upon the hob. He wiped his fingers upon the hearthrug, and scurried off again, to clatter till he found a second uncracked cup, and this he brought and placed beside his own.

Nor was the beginning of the inquisition such as Dennis had imagined it.

"Penn," chirped Mr. Beestock. "Sugar?"

"Thank you, but I've just had lunch, sir," Dennis answered.

"Yet presently we'll want our tea, I think."

For sixty minutes Mr. Beestock kept one eye on his kettle, and the other upon Penn. While thus engaged he rippled on from one question to another, which, when he afterwards recalled the scene, reminded Penn for all the world of the perennial runlet by the kerb of Trumpington. But all he could think of at the time, of course, was the manner of his answers, and sometimes Mr. Beestock smiled, and sometimes nodded, and always tripped off to his next question before his victim had finished with the last. When the kettle had boiled over for the fourth time, he suddenly cried "*Finis!*"—and made tea.

"Tea," he remarked, gravely, "is no good till your water has boiled over more than once. Now did you know *that*, Penn?"

"No, sir," Penn said, equally demurely.

"You'll learn," sighed Mr. Beestock, and when the tea was finished drew him to the window.

"You see our chapel," he continued, and indicated the building. "It was the first work Christopher Wren achieved. His uncle, the bishop, paid the cost of it, in thank-offering for getting out of the Tower after imprisonment for eighteen years."

"Yes?" said Penn, and wondered what was coming.

The sad-eyed scholar's voice sank.

"Eighteen years in the Tower," he repeated. "Have you thought, boy, how the winner of the scholarship will probably be required to devote his life work to dead languages? Eighteen years' captivity the bishop suffered, and gave a chapel to escape from it. Thrice eighteen years' captivity the scholar's lot—imprisonment with pulseless things, with images, with unrealities."

Penn found no words to answer. There was pain that pricked him in the old man's voice.

"Boy, it's manlier to farm," sighed Mr. Beestock. "And now good-bye, good-bye. I'll write to your head master."

The clue to this queer termination of the interview, which puzzled Penn extremely, and depressed him, was supplied by his brother when he had returned, and tubbed and changed.

"It doesn't mean he's down upon your chances," he explained. "I've often heard them saying about Beestock that he's wanted all his life to *do* things. At twelve years old he ran away to sea. He wasn't strong enough, and fate made a scholar and recluse of him."

Jim crossed the room, and pulled the double doors to.

"Now, old man, I've sported oak," he said. "I want to talk to you. I'm thundering glad you've turned up, Den. You may be useful."

There was something in his manner which alarmed Dennis. With the sporting of the oak—that act of shutting out the world beyond—the assured and buoyant undergrad. had all at once become the brother of the holidays, who would come so often to Dennis for his counsel. Old Penn, the Cambridge man, had vanished—Jim Penn sat in his place.

"I'm in a fix," he said, "but don't interrupt me; it's a longish story. You remember when I was at Kellcaster I told you fellows of the cuss who had these rooms before me—the mystery who was up here for a term and disappeared?"

Dennis nodded.

"It appears he popped up for the day before term began, hired a horse from old Pepperdine, the livery man, and let it down. Its knees were cut to ribbons, and my beauty leaves it for some labourers to lead home, and bolts straight away from Cambridge. Never a word of apology to Pepperdine; nor any compensation."

"Low down!" interjected Dennis. "But what's it matter to you?"

"I'm coming to it, Den. Pepperdine, of course, thinks he's at the 'Varsity still, and very soon comes furious round here. Finds me instead of priceless Spalding. Won't believe it when I tell him Spalding isn't up, isn't coming up, and nothing known of him. Carries on like blazes, swears I'm hiding him, and that his horse is damaged twenty pounds' worth. Exit Pepperdine."

"How exit Pepperdine?"

"Almost through the window, actually by the door; fired out on all-fours like a coal sack by your affectionate brother. What does Pepperdine do next?"

"How should I know?"

"Den, he posts off to the tutor, and learns that Spalding has really gone for good. But he doesn't tell the tutor a word about his gee, and he doesn't breathe a syllable against myself. He knows a trick worth two of that, the hound! He chalks one up against me, and bides his time. It comes to him."

"How, Jim?"

"When I, like an idiot, begin to cut lectures, and eventually get gated. Gated at six o'clock last month, I was—must be in college, you know, by six. Well, what should happen then but Tommy Gallagher must have his coming-of-age at Newmarket, and I—quadruple goat—must job a horse from Turnable's——"

"Who's he?"

"Another livery stable, by Granchester. And out I trot with Tommy Gallagher. All well and good, if I'd managed to get back by six. But I didn't! It was nearly half-past when Turnable saw his nag again, and just seven when I smuggled into coll. The porter didn't spot me, nor anyone."

"You broke your gate?"

"I did, worse luck. Sheer accident, I vow, old man. I cast a shoe."

"Well?"

"Well, I hadn't been twigged, so I thought it was all right. But, though I didn't know it, old Pepperdine and Turnable work together; so Pepperdine knows all about the gee, and how I returned her at half-past six o'clock. Somehow or other he had ferreted out, the hound, that I was gated, and the fat was in the fire. He saw his chance of crying quits."

"He'd never tell your tutor, Jim."

"Not if he could make a penny otherwise. He turns up here again, and presents an ultimatum. Either he'll tell the tutor that I broke my gate, with evidence from the stables, he reminds me, or I must pay him twenty-five pounds for the horse that Spalding lamed plus five pounds interest for his trouble. 'But I didn't hurt your beastly nag,' I told him. 'No, but somebody at your college did,' he said; 'and you kicked me out of here, mister.' So there was his ultimatum."

"Blackmail, Jim!"

"Something very near it. But that doesn't help."

"Well, let him split."

"And get sent down, or rusticated, for breaking gate—the sin that's unforgivable. Get sent down, lose the off-chance of my cricket blue next term, make the mater wretched—and bring disgrace on Kellcaster and Pater Bovo! No, thank you, Den. I chose the other thing."

"You paid him?"

"I promised to. I paid him a fiver down, and thought of tapping the pater for the rest. But I can't do it. He sort of hinted at Christmas that I must keep an eye on exes; that business wasn't bright——"

"And there are a lot of us to fend for."

"Too many for the pater to be handy with spare twenties. And, of course, I can't borrow from the men up here. It's not the game."

"Well?"

"You haven't any, Den?"

"About a sovereign, Jim."

"No good, old man—no earthly. So I did my best to smooth old Pepperdine down—took on the liability—to save my skin, you see—and gave him bills at four weeks for the twenty-five. That settled him *pro tem.* But the bills fall due on Monday."

Jim kicked the fire together and gulped down the cup of tea he had forgotten. He went to the window, and stared blankly into the quad.

"Yes," said Dennis, presently, "on Monday?"

"And I haven't got the money to meet them. If they're not met he'll trot off to the tutor."

"You think he will."

"I'm sure of it."

Dennis pondered, pacing up and down the room.

"Suppose, Jim," he suggested, "we were to offer the brute new bills, I to join my name to yours, as more security. That might appease him."

His brother swung round angrily.

"As if I'd let you, Den!" he cried. "As if I'd let you put your name to paper! No, Den, I'm not a sweep of that sort."

"Then how——"

"He'll be here on Monday morning. I must swallow humble-pie, and ask him to renew them. In other words, destroy them, and replace them by a new bill in three months—payable, that will be, in June. I'll offer him another tenner for it. Yes, I'll offer him a bill for thirty-five."

"Any chance of his accepting?"

Old Penn shrugged his shoulders.

"I can only try," he said.

"And if Pepperdine refuses?"

"Why, then," came the doleful rejoinder, "I must say good-bye—for awhile at any rate—to Cambridge. There'll be news, Den, for Kellcaster in that case!"

(*To be continued.*)

A JAPANESE SCENE

THERE is a large open space about the Uwenyo Station in Tokio, and across it the rickshaws dart and drop passengers and baggage with equal lack of ceremonial on the station threshold. Here one morning in autumn a small group of people is gathered in a circle. The darting rickshaws, the busy pigmy porters in dust-coats, knee breeches, and stockings, the workmen in blue nankeens stamped back and front with their master's label, the mothers with children wrapped up on their backs, the business men in hideous felt hats and German cloaks over brown silk kimonos and wooden shoes, they all pass the little group by as something too ordinary to deserve their attention.

The group is of about thirty persons. There are ten or twelve soldiers in dirty blue, one officer, some small, shaven-headed boys, some bandsmen with cymbals, a big drum and cornets, and a few men and women of the people. Suddenly the band strikes up in hideous discord, fondly imagined to be European music. The cornets bray, the cymbals clash, the drum is banged most lustily; while all the group sing up, in queer high-pitched tones, a wailing song of long phrases that die wearily away—the Japanese National Anthem.

When they are finished, the little officer steps forward into the circle, and speaks in short, spitting sentences, while the crowd gape with a curious forward lurch that is their characteristic. The soldiers and bandsmen stand at attention.

The soldiers are conscripts just joined, and about to leave at once by train for their head-quarters. It is a daily occurrence in Japan, where in every village you may see gardens that have a twenty-foot bamboo-pole sticking out of the ground with a gilded ball atop of it and a red streamer flying gaily from its neck, to show that the household has at least one hero gone to serve his Emperor. The women and men in this group are the kinsfolk of the conscripts, come to see them off, and they listen to the speech of the tiny officer as children might listen to an interesting teacher. The officer speaks to the men, and through them to those that have come with them, of their service and its honour, of the duty which is theirs to keep their land free and uninvaded, as it has been since time began. He tells them, without theatricality, that if ever one of them should have the chance to set his life between danger and his Emperor, no greater boon could be conferred upon him, and the listening relatives gape assent. He says that even as self-sacrifice is the best of life, so at any time their own chance may come to show themselves worthy of their fathers who died for Nihon. He is a national institution, this priest soldier of the Samurai, an epitome of the Japanese spirit, the Bushido.

The little officer pauses, then murmurs a few quick words, and suddenly they all shout, "*Bánzai, bánzai, bánzai,*" from the back of their throats, dry and quickly like a cough, but seemingly without emotion. Around them the rickshaws, the business men, the labourers still seek the affairs of the world; but the waiting group breaks up, the soldiers marching stolidly into the station, while their kinsfolk, with no farewells, turn homeward.

LEOPOLD SPERO.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF CRICKET

By E. H. D. SEWELL

SECOND ARTICLE:

HINTS TO THE YOUNG BATSMAN

I CLAIM to have made a discovery of some importance. It has been held up, for a very long time now, as something to the discredit of cricketers as a body, and of boy players in particular, that they will overdo batting at the nets, while none may be found who are keen to bowl or to field. That, in short, cricketers "love to bat," but hate to bowl or to field. For this peculiarity no reason has ever, that I have seen, been given in print. My discovery is this: that cricketers know by instinct that by dint of sheer practice they can become really good batsmen, but that no amount of bowling and fielding practice will in the end convert equally unsuitable "raw material" to start with into either a *really* good bowler or really good fieldsman.

I admit that the natural desire of the average healthy Englishman to hit or kill something, which has been handed down to us in our blood from our festive forefathers—who, if they didn't like their next-door neighbour, or any obnoxious person, just called on him with a knobkerrie, and, following through well, turned to see the umpire signal "Six!" as it were—makes the hitting part of any game its most enjoyable feature. And that this is a reason why, from the day when we first begin to take interest in the net-practice list on the school board, we all rush to the bat and pads, and shirk the other part of the contract. But behind it all there lurks that feeling that while we may never hold catches as they ought to be held, or pitch the right amount of off-break on the right spot at will, still we may train ourselves into the *run-getting habit* which, in so many words, is the art of batting. Whether I have made a discovery or not does matter, because the loathing, everywhere existent, for fielding and bowling practice (by comparison with the feverish anxiety to bat at the nets) is generally ascribed to laziness, and cricketers are not lazy. At any rate, for those who are there is no hope. For it is one of the first principles of the art of batting that you must work hard, as hard as you do for any examination, if you expect to become proficient.

"W. G." practised more than any other great batsman. He was always at it, and never started a day's cricket without having a knock at the nets for ten minutes or so—one of the most essential habits to acquire, and one which very few of the world's great batsmen failed to acquire. Hirst is one of them. He goes very rarely to the nets once the regular season has begun. But I have not heard anyone suggest that he refrained from doing so owing to laziness! So that the first thing for a boy cricketer to decide in his own mind is that he must work genuinely hard, and not merely humbug himself into the belief that he is working hard, if he wants to be a successful batsman. He must *think* cricket all the time, and work out the this and that of each stroke, never letting himself get into that fatal habit of thought that the bowler (whoever he is) is *his* master, but that he, from the start, is the bowler's master. More wickets have fallen owing to the kind of funk which is peculiar to ball games, and which in cricket has for its centre the first ball of an innings, than ought to be possible when you weigh it up and consider that the first ball need not necessarily be a difficult one—it might be an easy half-volley—and that, man to man, you are really just as good a bat as your deadly enemy, for the time being, is a bowler. To begin with, therefore, the mental attitude for every would-be batsman to acquire is that which says: "I am just as good as he, in fact a bit better."

Now as to stance and method and all that. There should be no laying down of the law as

to how you should stand at the wicket, except so far as is covered by the one word "comfortably." There is no sense or reason in compelling young players to stand in any position that is not the natural one they would adopt if obeying the order: "Now, go and stand at the wicket, and prepare to play the ball." The only exception I would make is that the chest must be almost square towards point, the elbows well away from the body, and that elbow which is nearer to the bowler must be pointing almost towards mid-off. If it suits you to stoop or crouch, then stoop or crouch; and if it suits you to stand with your feet wide apart by all means do so; but you will find that things will run much more easily and your footwork become what footwork ought to be, and always is with really good players, if you have your feet not more than about nine inches apart and your weight almost equally distributed upon both. You can then move either foot to play back or forward, as each ball compels you to do, with greater ease than is possible if, as is so often advised, your weight is mostly on the foot nearer the stumps. There are some who object to this because by *not* planting most of the weight on the foot nearer the stumps the youngster is given greater facility for movement of that foot *away* from the line between wicket and wicket. That is to say, he can funk more easily, but here the theory "once a funk always a funk" obtains; for, though you may seem to cure a youngster of "running away" by retreating towards square-leg, still he will, if really a funk, run away in some other manner. Merely keeping his right foot more or less firm and *appearing* not to run away (making the effectiveness of the stroke a matter of luck) is useless. So that, while counselling any youngster to adopt the stance at the wicket which he finds the most comfortable, I would add the advice: "Feet nine inches apart, left elbow towards mid-off, and chest facing point."

Above all, do NOT face the bowler.

That doctrine is the most poisonous ever enunciated. It has done much more harm than good to the art of batting; for though it has opened up the on-side as a fruitful run-getting area, it has almost deleted the off-side from the book of the batsman. Batting without the various cuts, the off-drive, and the cover-drive is a ghastly parody of what batting ought to be, and I say it without fear of contradiction that a very large number of the big innings played in Test and other great matches of the past ten years have been the result of play as unlike real batting as chalk is unlike cheese. A long series of dibs and dabs and pushes and deflections of the ball somewhere between mid-on and long-leg, with here and there a "hook" to deep square-leg, is not to be compared with the glorious displays we used to see when off-drives and cuts followed each other in great profusion. Why, the very fact that during the past ten years that new position in the field has arisen which is known in cricket slang as "the box" or "the gully," but which on a plan of the field would be set down as "short third-man," is in itself most eloquent of the fact that cutting has gone out of use. Some of the old hands would have "killed" the people who stand six yards or so from the bat and snap up the mild efforts to cut made these days by players who finish in the first twenty of the first-class averages.

The two-eyed stance which results from this facing of the bowler is the most unkind stance any school coach can insist on in the case of his young charges. It is futile for him to point to R. E. Foster and V. Trumper as instances of brilliant exponents of the cut who, more or less, adopt the two-eyed stance, because there his little list comes to an untimely end. Hobbs can cut, we all know, and he, too, is slightly affected by this doctrine, but these are the kind of batsmen who could make runs from any position. It is not the methods of genius but the methods of soundness that must be instilled into the young cricketer. Let each one prove afterwards whether he possesses genius or not. What would an old cricketer have said to a school coach in 1900 whom he found teaching a youngster to bowl as B. J. T. Bosanquet bowled a year or so later? Youngsters are far too prone themselves these very precocious days to begin at the end, and to let all the groundwork go hang without coaches telling them to do this, that, and the other thing *because* "that's how Trumper, Foster, and Hobbs do it."

Having adopted the most comfortable stance, the beginner's next first principle is that of the straight blade. Here I might urge the value of playing forward with a crooked one because Bobby Abel played himself from the obscurity of nothingness into the England Eleven with one, but I refrain. The first thing looked for by all who know anything about the game is whether a man's bat is wielded straight or not. Constant practice with a bat, just as I advised would-be bowlers to live with a cricket ball, is a first aid to the acquisition of a straight blade in play. That, with due attention to the

left elbow up and consistent ignoring of the two-eyed stance, all tends to the one desired end. You have only to stand before a cheval glass and take up the two positions—first, the true cricket position, and then the two-eyed stance position—to see in which the blade is straighter and more likely to be wielded straightly. In the one I condemn a second action is necessary in order to get it back into the straight, and *every extra action in batting means fewer runs and more frequent loss of wickets.*

When waiting for the bowler to deliver, swing the bat *straight* back up and down the line of middle stump to middle stump. Why swing it out towards point or behind you towards square-leg? Either action involves extra labour in bringing the bat back into the straight, where *it must be* for defensive purposes, and is often wanted for attacking purposes. And one of the secrets of how to play a long innings is to save yourself all *unnecessary* labour. You who are high-flyers at mathematics might amuse yourselves during one of our typical English summer days of pouring rain working out how many foot-pounds of energy a boy has to exert to wield a bat weighing 2lbs. for a given period—say, twenty minutes. Then you will realise what a really long innings means in the physical labour of stroke-play alone, quite regardless of all that is required for running, and the mental and eye strain involved in playing the right game all the while. Ignoramuses speak and write of the laziness of standing still hitting fours to the boundary on a hot day as though all the rest of the physical and mental strain must be ignored. Some of them should try what it is like to hit a hundred when the thermometer is about 90 degs. in the shade, and not a leaf is stirring!

Hobbs playing the hook stroke.
An impression of our greatest batsman by Charles Ambrose.

The next thing to be done, having decided to set about acquiring a straight blade, is to practise persistently, and in doing so to study defence first, attack second. While a half-volley or an easy full-pitch (they are not *all* easy) should always be hit, it is a fact that *anyone* can hit a half-volley, but only a really good player can keep a really good ball out of his wicket. Defence must be studied and studied hard, and in writing this I do not excuse the lad who, if the first ball happens to be a half-volley or an easy full toss, does not hit it. It is the batsman's duty to get hold of the bowling at once, and, especially now that bowlers may not bowl practice balls when two batsmen are at the wicket, many a first over or two offers ten runs that are allowed to go begging.

It does a bowler no good to be hard hit in his first two overs, whereas nobody knows better than he, if he *is* a bowler, whether you have let him off cheaply. Play back just as you play forward, always with the bat swinging alongside the leg. If you have gauged the line of flight of the ball accurately your leg will not get on to that line, if the ball is a good-length one,

in such a way as to prevent free use of your bat. If it is not a good length ball *it does not matter whether your leg is between wicket and wicket or not*, you have more time and space wherein to wield your bat. A four is a four whether you covered your wicket with your legs or not, and so long as you play a stroke it does not matter in the least if you are standing before all three stumps. Some balls cannot be properly played from any other position, and from the beginning of cricket batsmen have stood in front of their stumps. The only harm in protecting the stumps with the legs is when players do so flagrantly, making no attempt to play the ball. That is not, never was, nor ever will be cricket. I write here only of making a practice of doing this, since it should be obvious that *there must be* occasions when batsmen get in front of their wickets with the full intention of playing the ball, but, changing their minds at the last moment, do not do so. Few of the very best players have ever played a long innings without doing this. A deal of nonsense is talked and written about the crime of protecting your wicket with your leg or legs, and I dare say some of my young readers are old enough to have met the man who is highly indignant at the modern habit of stepping back in front of the wicket to force or play balls on the on-side, but who if asked to instruct you as to the best means of playing forward will tell you to throw out your left leg and play the bat close alongside it. In other words, to do with your left leg *exactly* what he has just been telling you you must not do with your right!

In learning the various strokes bear in mind that the ball *must be hit;* it must not be allowed *to hit* the bat, except when you are forced at the last instant to change from an offensive to a defensive stroke, and have to keep the ball out of your wicket somehow. With this single exception the bat must always be "put against" the ball.

Again, avoid mechanism. In other words, don't get into the habit of *always* cutting at at a ball which is suitable for the cut. Practise hitting that ball somewhere else—say either square past point's right hand instead of past his left; or past mid-off; or by stepping right back and in front of your off-stump you can *easily* "hook" this ball past short-leg, and between him and mid-on. If you always play a given ball in a given way the fielding captain will have no trouble in placing the field for you. The art of batsmanship soars no higher than the pinnacle, attained only by the very few it is true, whereon is written the captain's confession: "I cannot place the field to stop him." That pinnacle is the goal of every one of my young readers, and I may tell each one he will never get there if he learns to bat mechanically, and bats like he eats his morning egg, the same way every time.

It is right to take a view of the field before you make each stroke, but too much stress *can* be laid on this, for you must learn to make the field dance to your tune, and must not be "captained" by your opponents into altering your game to suit them.

When you hit, HIT. The half-hit gets fully 25 per cent. of the wickets that fall, and probably more. Remember, when the half-volley comes along, that you detest everything in flannels standing anywhere in front of you, and *want to* hurt that everything in flannels.

Final precepts: Keep that right foot well within the territory bounded by a line drawn from the leg-stump to the heel of the foot at its original position (on the on-side), and a line drawn from outside the off-stump to the popping crease at right angles. *Never* shift it *back* towards square leg until you have made two hundred runs, and are doing what the papers call "taking liberties," and feel, therefore, that you could make runs with an umbrella.

Keep your eye glued to the ball and *not to the bowler's arm*. Watch his hand until the last moment in order to detect change of break.

When you come down on a yorker come down on it, and stay there until the ball is dead. Yorkers acquire top-spin on touching the ground, and if you lift your bat too soon may roll on to the stumps. A better way to play a yorker is to push straight forward and play the ball before it pitches, but this is not easy in the case of the very fast one.

Treat each bowler that comes on as better than his predecessor. To you he generally is, simply because of some slight difference in pace or flight *which is new to you*. This is the secret of the success of the wise old saw: "Any change is better than no change," and just exactly why Trumper might at any moment be "b. Strudwick 210" in a Test match after ten others had failed to dislodge him.

Walk to the wicket fully convinced that you are a better bat than your opponents have a bowler. Acquire the habit of the *right* type of confidence in your own powers, which is *not* side or conceit or any nonsense of that sort, but *half the battle* in cricket, whether you are batting, bowling, fielding, catching, or thinking about the game.

(*Next month's article will deal with fielding, running between wickets, and tactics generally.*)

Sticking at Nothing

A "Sparkes" Story ⁘ ⁘ ⁘ By H. HERVEY

Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock

While the rest clutched the rope Sparkes stepped cautiously on to the frail bridge.

WHEN the train halted for the passengers' breakfast at Paddakka Station, I spotted Sparkes on the platform, so shouted to him.

"You!" he cried, rushing up and grasping my outstretched hand. "Can you break your journey?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Down you get, then!" and he flung open the door.

My servants unloaded my things, porters took out my heavier traps from the guard's brake, the train went on, and I accompanied my friend to his rooms—reserved for superior travelling officers of the railway.

"Now, what is it?" I inquired as we sat down, and he bawled for the *punkah*, the hot weather being in full force.

"I've got something on," he chuckled, meaningly.

"You always have," I retorted. "What is it this time?"

"Read that," drawing a paper from his pocket, and tossing it to me. I read as follows:—

F. S. SPARKES, ESQ., 5th May.
Traffic Superintendent,
Northern Division.

MOST RESPECTED SIR,

I beg to report that since 1st instant. one European gentleman has alighted from down mail, and is putting up in station waiting-room for natives only, and making botheration. He is with ferocious appearance, armed with two guns, also many queer instruments, and is using swear language at us. I and staff are afraid; village constable also afraid. Hearing that your Honour is at Paddakka, I herewith lay information at your feet, and hope you will vouchsafe presence here, and free us of fierce individual.

Your most obedient servant,
K. RAMIAH NAIDU,
Station Master,
Papatlakondah.

"Fourth station from this," I observed, musingly.

"Yes. The place itself is a beastly hole. If our 'fierce individual' hopped out of the train there with an eye to *shikar*, he must have found himself mightily sold by now. I wonder what attracted him?"

"Papatlakondah is so named from its hill, eh?" I asked.

"I believe so; but what has that got to do with it?"

"A good deal, I fancy. The chap is bound to be one of your scientific tourists, travelling by train to the south; and struck by the appearance of the hill, he just got out at Papatlakondah to prospect it—especially as there's a temple or something on the top, isn't there?"

"It is a temple, but quite inaccessible, so far as I know; but I've never thought of making inquiries. However, we'll soon unearth all about it."

We left by the mid-day local. Alighting at the little wooden station of Papatlakondah—there was only one solitary truck of cut timber on the tiny siding—we dived into the booking office, and beckoning to Ramiah Naidu, told him to clear out his store-room for our occupation, get our traps put into it, and then join us. In a few minutes the station master appeared.

"Well, Ramiah Naidu," commenced Sparkes, "I have come, on your letter, and asked Mr. Hervey to accompany me. What news?"

"No any other news, sir, except that the cholera has attacked the village."

"Hang the cholera! That's with us always, off and on. What about the strange gentleman?"

"Still he is in waiting-room, sir," replied Ramiah Naidu, lowering his voice. "His servant is Bombay fellow, and can give no any information about his master. The native passengers grumbling plenty because waiting-room not available, and they threaten to write complaint to company if I do not force gentleman to vacate."

"Humph! What have you yourself been able to gather about him?"

"Nothing too much, sir. He speaking only English, and has asked many questions about hill. Every evening he puts servant with gun to guard waiting-room door; then he takes second gun and goes walk round hill. If night passengers disturb him, he bawls out with savage English words."

"Do you know anything about the hill?"

"Only from gossip, sir. I have never climbed precipice; because I am poor family person, your honour, and do not like to break neck by going to dangerous places."

"Bother you and your neck! What's the gossip?"

"Villagers telling, sir, that in antiquity age one potentate—for vow—has builded temple on top, and cut walls with curious inscriptions and carving. Many people did come from all parts to worship. Then, one day, world has shaken, and hill divided into two parts, as it now is, so worship has stopped. The people have made no attempt to hew steps on the side where temple is, because they believe that Supreme Deity was displeased with temple god, did metamorphose him to wicked spirit, and cut off approach by quake of ground."

"Where is the division?"

"They say very near to this side, and most portion of hill is that side—on which temple standing, sir."

"How wide is the crack?"

"I have not heard the particulars, sir, more than that it is not very wide. For a tradition is telling that many years gone, before railway was constructed, a district magistrate visited this place on official tour. He climbed hill, and sending men to far-off jungle, he procured wood, and builded bridge across division."

"Well, is the bridge still there?"

"I do not know, sir. Oldest villagers utter tradition, but no one has been up to verify.'

"Humph! Come on, Hervey!" he muttered, turning to me. "Let us interview the rooster, whoever he is."

We knocked at the waiting-room door, and a loud "Come in!" bade us enter. Seated on a deck-chair, and fanning himself with a palmyra leaf, we saw a middle-aged man, bearded, large, loose-limbed, and of an intellectual though rather stern expression. The room was littered with all sorts of things peculiar to the tourist and greenhorn fraternity; but the presence of a camera and its accessories—the station master's "queer instruments"—told us that the stranger dabbled in photography.

"Good day to you!" began my chum. "Let me introduce Mr. Hervey of the Government Telegraphs, and myself as Sparkes, district traffic manager of this railway."

"Glad to meet you, gentlemen," replied the traveller, rising and bowing. "My name is Abinger. To what am I indebted for this visit?"

"Well, primarily to your monopolising this waiting-room for the last four days, in rather a high-handed sort of way—excuse my plain speaking. You prevent the native passengers using it, and have frightened my station subordinates with your guns and unparliamentary language."

"I am sorry if I have inconvenienced or offended anyone. I trust you have not come

to turn me out, because I hope to finish my business here by to-morrow evening."

"May I ask your business?"

"Do you see that hill?" rejoined Mr. Abinger, pointing through the window. "Well, I have ascertained that the shape is approximately circular, the height about two hundred feet, and the perimeter sheer. There is a rough zigzag path, cut into the hither segment as you can see from here, which I think is climbable. I have also ascertained that by some prehistoric convulsion of nature the hill has been rent asunder; and as I judge the temple on its summit to be very ancient and likely to be adorned with sculptures of old-world heathen worship, I am most desirous of securing photos of such relics. I would have ascended yesterday, only that I felt rather unwell; and although I do not feel quite myself to-day I purpose making an effort this evening: passing the night in the temple, taking some pictures, and continuing my journey south by to-morrow's mid-day train. Till which I beg you will not object to my remaining on."

"Not at all," replied Sparkes, completely mollified. "I suppose you have heard somehow that there is an old wooden bridge spanning the chasm?"

"I found that out myself. I have not been able to glean much from the people here; while, as for the guide-books, they do not even mention the place. All the better for me. If I discover any objects of interest the snapshots I should take of them will be welcomed by the antiquarian society I belong to. As for the bridge, I saw it against the strip of sky when I ventured into the crevasse yesterday."

"Any objection to our going up with you to-day?"

"None whatever. I shall be glad of your company."

"When do you start?"

"As soon as the sun has gone down a bit."

"What about your dinner? I was hoping you would dine with us."

"You are very kind; but I shall take some refreshments with me to the temple. My servant will carry up my cork mattress, etc. So I shall be quite comfortable. But if you let me lunch with you to-morrow, before I leave by the mid-day train, I shall be glad."

Thus it was settled, and we left him, promising to be ready whenever he called.

A little after three the servant summoned us. Out we went, and found Abinger loaded with his photographic plant, while the servant had a bundle of bedding on his head, a lantern and a small lunch-basket in his hands, and a water canteen slung on his shoulder. The hill stood about three hundred yards from the station. We passed through the little village street, objects of respectful curiosity to the yokels; but when they saw us turn off towards the hill they broke into audible murmurs of astonishment, as if they thought we were going to our death.

The ascent now commenced, the servant first, Abinger next, then I, then Sparkes. Those steps must have been cut in the solid rock when the world was much younger, for many of them were quite worn away, and we had regularly to worm over the gaps. However, we reached the head of the zigzag in safety, and were now able to see that the crown of the hill rose at a stiffish gradient to the temple perched on its apex. Smooth sailing enough but for the yawning cleft, which, together with the bridge in close proximity, speedily caught our eyes, for the scalp of the hill was as bare as a billiard ball. As far as I could judge, the gap from lip to lip measured about twelve feet, the bridge overlapping by, say, two feet on either side, and merely resting on the edges. How the dead-and-gone magistrate had constructed that bridge was a puzzler, unless he had reared the girder beams upright on this side, lowered them on to the other, and then fixed the cross-pieces by gradually working on from this extremity. Anyhow, there it was, following the slope of the hill, and apparently substantial enough, with its farther end quite three feet higher than the one by which we stood in silent contemplation. The bridge was rather over a yard in breadth, but there was nothing in the shape of a rail, and to glance down into the dark crevasse below made one feel queer.

"Do you think the structure safe, Mr. Sparkes?" asked Abinger, breaking the hush into which we had fallen.

"Looks like it; though it's impossible to tell without trying. The thing may have been here for years. Got a piece of rope, anyone? A short length will do, provided it's strong."

"What on earth have you hatched now?" I whispered, savagely, too well aware of my friend's inherent dare-devilry.

"Wait; you'll see. Ah, this will suit," he added, as Abinger's servant, by his master's orders, loosed the rope which confined the bundle of bedding. "Well, look here," continued Sparkes, taking two turns of the rope round his right hand, and giving me the other end; "just you fellows clap on to this, while I test

the bridge. Grab tight, and if the bridge gives under my weight—haul me up, that's all."

I saw his drift; I realised the risk, and endeavoured to dissuade him from running it.

But no, mule-headed as ever, he would have his own way, so there was nothing but to make the best of it. So while we three clutched the rope Sparkes cautiously stepped on to the bridge. I expected to see it bend beneath my friend's weight; but it did not appear to sag even the eighth of an inch; I momentarily looked for the crash, but it came not.

"Hum!" muttered Sparkes, advancing a pace or two more, and in the coolest manner turning to face us. "The thing seems all-square, but hasn't the ghost of a spring in it." And with the words he commenced stamping his feet.

"Don't, you idiot!" I vociferated, in agonising suspense.

"Nervous—eh?" he laughed, coming off. "It's strong enough, though I suspect the wood is as dead as old boots. We'll go over one at a time, and I'll lead." Saying which he dropped the rope and gingerly crossed. "There you are!" he grinned from the other side. "Come on!"

We followed one by one without anything happening; nevertheless it was blood-curdling work. The servant appeared to be least affected, balancing his load on his head, and looking down the abyss quite unconcernedly.

We continued on to the little temple. It presented nothing new or attractive to Sparkes or me, for we did not lean towards archæology, whereas one glance round the interior sent Abinger into raptures. Seeing that he itched to get to work, we left him in his glory; the servant accompanied us to guard his master's property in the waiting-room. We again passed over the bridge, crept down the zigzag, reached the station, had dinner, and after a smoke turned in.

"Well, I wonder how old what-d'ye-call-him enjoyed his night in the temple!" remarked my chum, jumping out of bed, and stretching himself as he gazed through the open window at the hill; but before I could make any rejoinder he continued, in a changed tone: "I say—here! Come and look! The fellow is signalling or something!"

I sprang to his side, looked, and, sure enough, saw what appeared to be a white handkerchief being fitfully waved; but no figure of the waver.

"He's in a fix, Sparkes, and is waving as he lies," I remarked, and we hurriedly proceeded to dress.

"No doubt of it," agreed Sparkes. "I wonder what has got hold of him—the spook that choked the native worshippers off?"

"Illness, probably," was my reply.

"I think it must be; and as we may have to carry the chap down that man-trap, we'll take the two porters with us. They are southern Mohammedans, so local superstition won't worry them."

We bustled out, and, followed by the two porters and Abinger's servant, streaked for the hill, clambered the zigzag, crossed the bridge one at a time, and reached the temple; where, as surmised, we found the tourist lying on the outer plinth, speechless, and in the throes of cholera! He had managed to *roll* to his present position, from where he had signalled to us directly it became light.

No time for inquiries or speculation, no time to think of the risk of contagion. Lifting the sick man in his cork mattress—I and the servant at his shoulders, the porters at his feet—we carried him, while Sparkes, who was too tall to be one of the bearers, brought up the rear, loaded with the camera and plate-box.

Now whether it was the urgency of the case, coupled with the fear of catching the fell disease from the sufferer, that caused us to be forgetful, I cannot say, but when we arrived at the bridge no question as to its ability to sustain our combined weight occurred to us. We got bang on to the thing, shuffled across, and the two rear carriers had barely stepped clear when with a dull crash the entire structure collapsed, and amid a cloud of dust disappeared into the yawning gulf! Evidently now the timbers had become a mass of punk through age, hitherto held together by some mysterious law of cohesion, and sufficiently strong to support the weight of one man, but not that of five. Mercifully, it did not give way half a second earlier!

"That was a narrow squeak!" coolly observed Sparkes from the other side, after I had quietened the trembling natives and seen to poor Abinger.

"It was. But how about you, old chap?"

"Pooh! Nothing easier. Look out! I'm going to shy these things over first. Make a hammock with one of the porter's head-cloths. Hold it at the four corners, and I'll chuck the kit into it."

Under a vague idea that his well-known resourcefulness had suggested to him some feasible plan of getting across, I prepared

the hammock, which we held as close to the brink as we dared. Whereupon Sparkes, also approaching the other verge, threw the articles one at a time into the outstretched cloth.

"Now about yourself?" I asked, anxiously.

"Nothing easier. You four join hands, grip firm, and stand a few paces back."

"What for?"

"What for?" he echoed, again giving one of his diabolical grins. "Why, to prevent me from toppling over the brow of the hill behind you."

"What on earth do you mean?" I gurgled.

"I'm going to jump it!"

"Are you daft?" I screeched, horrified at the idea.

True, the jump would not be much for a man in training, and on ordinary fair ground; but, though quite a young fellow, strong and healthy, Sparkes was not in training, added to which the mere contemplation of the proposed leap was enough to turn the heart sick. Under normal circumstances a long-jump of fourteen feet or so—with a run—would be nothing to speak of; but here? Supposing he did clear the crevasse, could we break his impetus, gained on the downward swoop and the downward jump? Could we check him from going headlong over the brow so dangerously close behind us?

"For goodness' sake reflect!" I urged, appealingly.

"What's there to reflect about?" he chuckled, as if amused at my trepidation. "I'm not going to live up here till we can think of some other way for my getting over—and there is none, as far as I can see. So shut up, and form line."

They prepared to meet the shock with all their strength, then Sparkes took a run, and leaped.

"Wait!" I implored, as a sudden idea struck me. "If you give me authority to the station master, I'll bring up some timber from that truck-load on the siding, and try to bridge this for you!"

"Meaning the whole day, perhaps; during which Abinger may shoot out. Besides, I don't want to starve, and I have nothing to smoke."

"I'll see after Mr. Abinger once we take

him down, and I'll bring you grub and tobacco if you'll only have patience."

"Grandmother! Now arrange your chain, and mind you stop me, or else I shall go a cropper over the edge."

Realising the futility of further argument, I formed the chain with Abinger's servant to my right, the two porters to my left; and, describing what was to follow, ordered them to grip hands like mad, and meet the shock with all their strength. We had removed the moaning Abinger to one side, for Sparkes expressed his intention of jumping where the bridge had been, as it was obviously the narrowest spot in the cleft. Setting our teeth, we "prepared for cavalry," while Sparkes backed a dozen paces up the slope to obtain his run.

"Are you ready?" he cried.

"Yes; go on!" I muttered, nigh beside myself with apprehension.

I saw him start; I closed my eyes in agony. The next moment I opened them—to see the fellow descend with a thud on our side. The second following he dashed into our chain; he bulged but did not break it; and my dear old friend was safe!

With much difficulty we managed to convey the sick man down the zigzag and on to the station, where we administered chlorodyne and brandy. Sparkes wired to Paddakka for the railway apothecary, who arrived by the next local. He succeeded in checking the cholera, and on the third day declared the patient sufficiently recovered to proceed on his journey. We put Abinger into a reserved compartment with his servant, and bid him good-bye, thankful that the poor chap was well out of the wood, and we had escaped scot-free.

A fortnight later, when Sparkes and I again chanced to be together farther up the line, the guard of that day's up-mail handed us a packet, the contents of which proved to be two photos of the Papatlakondah Temple sculptures, handsomely framed, one for each of us, with a few words of grateful dedication written by Abinger on the backs.

THE END

COMPETITIONS FOR MAY

INTERESTING CONTESTS IN WHICH ALL CAPTAINITES MAY TAKE PART

No. 1.—Photographs of School Sports

This competition is for amateur photographers only. Photographs entered may depict any event in your school sports this year. Your name, address, and age, together with particulars of the event, including the name of the school, must be written *on the back of the print*. The make of camera used should also be stated. The closing date of this competition is May 15th, but entries should be posted as soon as possible. We reserve the right to publish any photograph submitted.

FIRST PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: Goods to the value of One Guinea.

SECOND PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Book by a CAPTAIN author.

No. 2.—Acrostic: Empire Day

Our next number will be in your hands just in time for Empire Day. We want you this month to construct a sentence of nine words of which the initials spell the words "Empire Day" in the correct order. Here is an example:—

Every **M**ay **P**atriotic **I**deals **R**evive
Enthusiastic **D**eterminations **A**mong **Y**ouths

In this competition extra prizes will be awarded to colonial readers, whose attempts must be received by July 20th.

FIRST PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: Goods to the value of Half a Guinea.

SECOND PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Book by a CAPTAIN author.

No. 3.—Essay: "Should Lawn Tennis be encouraged in Schools?"

Write an essay not exceeding 250 words in length on the above subject.

FIRST PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Tennis Racket or Cricket Bat.

SECOND PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Book by a CAPTAIN author.

Rules and Conditions

1. The name, address, and age of the competitor must be written above his attempt.
2. Each attempt must be accompanied by the proper coupon to be found on page iv.
3. Competitors will be divided into two classes, as follows:—

   Class I.—Competitors sixteen years of age and over.

   Class II.—Competitors under sixteen.
4. Entries for competitions Nos. 2 and 3 must be received not later than Wednesday, May 20th, 1914, addressed to the Competition Editor, THE CAPTAIN, 8, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. Colonial entries for competition No. 2 must arrive not later than July 20th.
5. The number of the competition must be written in the top left-hand corner of the envelope in which an attempt is posted.
6. The Editor's decision must be accepted as final.

CONSOLATION PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED IN EACH COMPETITION

THE WITCH'S SPELL.

By CAPTAIN G. A. HOPE

I

JONES, of Mill House, had just made seventy, and Mill House clapped. Fleur-de-Lys House, on the other hand, did something more like scowling. Such high scoring was contrary to all precedent in a mere house second game; also, the afternoon was exceedingly hot, and Jones had kept them on the run ever since dinner-time. These drawbacks cut both ways, however. Jones, naturally, had also had to run a good deal in the heat, and he began to grow careless, even though he knew that his house captain was in the offing. He was a painstaking bat, and so far had not given a chance; but at last he fell into temptation. He opened his shoulders to a long hop, and pulled the ball valiantly to long-on. Unfortunately, he lifted it badly. Crichton, of whom stories have been told before, was standing at long-on. I say standing, because he was more or less asleep from boredom. As a rule Jones put in most of his work on the off—which, perhaps, was as well for Crichton. Crichton was a tower of strength in the three-quarter line of the school Fifteen, but he was a rabbit of the bunniest at cricket, and would have been on house third game, except that his cricket captain would not allow a man with Fifteen colours to play with the little boys. Crichton himself would not have cared. At that moment, such waking thoughts as he had were far away, when a piercing yell recalled him to the stern business of life.

"Crichton! Wake up!"

Masefield, captain of house second, though of no special importance, was an autocrat on the ground, even with Fifteen men. Crichton woke up, and, to his horror, saw the ball hurtling through the air towards him. Though no cricketer, he had learnt spontaneity of action in many other ways, and he was ready for it when it arrived. He did not expect to catch it, and he did expect to be stung up a lot, but he had at least to pretend to try.

"Go-osh!"

This from Masefield. Crichton had actually brought off a catch, and not so easy a one either. No one was more astonished than the hero himself; but he rose to the occasion at once, and hurled the ball up with a joyous war-whoop, as Jones started off to where the coats were.

Mill House tail was soon disposed of, and as Fleur-de-Lys left the field, Crichton joined Masefield.

"I say," he said, "after my bringing off that brilliant catch, you might let me go in first."

"Brilliant catch!" said Masefield. "First-class fluke! But they will stick in even a rabbit's paw sometimes."

"Anyhow, I caught it, and Jones had made far more runs than were good for him or us. So I want to go in first."

"What's the good? You'll only make your usual duck."

"Quite likely," said Crichton. "But if I don't, you stand a brew at Telson's."

"If you make five," he said. "I'm pretty safe. And then, I suppose, you'll slope off?"

"Well, I did think of doing something of the kind," replied Crichton. 'Meanwhile, I'll borrow young Sale's pads."

Crichton's notion of batting was simple—a wild swipe and no more. He took first ball, swiped, and missed. The ball, luckily, missed also. He hit the second and it landed by cover-point in the next game. Result, four. He just tipped the third, but the effect was as from a neat cut. Result, two, and a brew from Masefield. He missed the fourth, which was dead straight, and before the bails had touched ground again

he was on his way back to the coats. He gave young Sale his pads, also his bat to look after, and putting on his blazer as he went, passed up the field and out on to the downs at the back of the pavilion.

Once outside, he turned sharp to the left, and went down, till he came to a fence overlooking a long valley in the downland, which was known as Knill's Bottom—Knill, a bad-tempered individual, being its owner and farmer. Crichton paused at the fence, and scanned the valley keenly for a few minutes. Then, apparently satisfied, he turned up the slope of the downs, till he came to a hillock above a wood, which marked the upper end of Knill's Bottom. Here he again scouted carefully and systematically for a few minutes, and then, satisfied that the coast was clear, he cut a forked stick and went down through the wood, making as little noise in indiarubber-soled shoes as an Indian hunter in moccasins. Half-way down he crossed a fence, and then, leaving the path, he began to search among the undergrowth and weeds near a brook.

There were many sides to Crichton's character, and, being country born and raised, expert woodcraft was one of them. This skill he had lately been turning to good account for the benefit of Mr. Henry Smith, M.A., F.R.S., F.L.S., the head of the school natural history society. It is doubtful if he would have done so if he had not lost his special permit for swimming; which enabled him to bathe out of school bathing hours. Crichton was very nearly as much at home in the water as a seal, but objected to swimming when the water was overcrowded. Being only in the Upper Fifth, and so not a prefect, to escape this infliction he had to get leave from a friendly master. One such friend he had, the O.C., O.T.C., in which Crichton was now a subaltern, but he considered two arrows in the quiver better than one. Mr. Smith was of an easy-going and unsuspicious nature, as becomes a true scientist, and Crichton thought he would serve. When Mr. Smith gave out his intention of founding a small menagerie, Crichton knew that he would. He started the menagerie by presenting two young squirrels, and was now on his way to secure some grass snakes for the same purpose. He had long known that grass snakes were to be found near the stream running down into the main brook in Knill's Bottom.

But he had no luck at first. For some time he only saw one snake, which escaped. So he moved up the hill over the fence again, and drew the upper reaches of the brook. Here his luck was better. He found one almost at once, and after a brisk thirty seconds pinned it down, caught it by the tail, and dropped it into a canvas bag. In a little time he caught two more, and was about to try a new place, when he heard a sound of heavy footsteps among the dried leaves and undergrowth of the lower wood. For a moment he rose, looking back like a startled panther. Then, noiseless as a panther again, he slipped out of the wood and up the back of the hillock, from which he could see the dividing fence and the pasture land below the wood. There he lay down, just peeping over the top to await developments. Development came in due course. For some minutes sounds came from the wood as of a broken-winded cart-horse forcing its way uphill, and at last a large-sized farmer, red-faced and blowing hard after his exertions, broke covert and came to the fence which marked the end of his land.

"Ah, there you are, you pesky colleger!" he panted. "I saw you by my fence down by the cricket field. I thought I'd find you hereabout."

"Awfully good of you!" said Crichton. "I was just thinking that a little company would be no bad thing. Suspicious old rogue!" he added to himself. "I thought he was safely out of the way. However, he never saw me in the wood at all. My luck's in."

Mr. Knill, the farmer, suffered from delusions, in that he fancied he saw not less than half the college on his land whenever he went out. He also had a hobby in the shape of making vigorous complaints, in writing and in person, to the Head. The Head was getting tired of Mr. Knill, his hobbies and delusions.

"Good! Company!" roared Mr. Knill. "I'll give ye company! I want that black and white cap of yourn, and we'll see what your maister'll say to un. I'll have no trespassing on my land."

"Hurrah!" cried Crichton, with enthusiasm. "Why should you? Don't you stand any nonsense, Mr. Knill. An Englishman's land is his castle. Oh, I say! Encore!" And he clapped with enthusiasm.

Mr. Knill was ponderous, and as he hoisted himself over the stake-and-binder fence, something gave way. There was a momentary interval for grabbing at a quite inadequate hazel shoot, and then everything collapsed, and Mr. Knill went into the ditch legs uppermost. The ditch was dry, certainly, but was well filled with nettles and brambles. Crichton would have liked to sit out the performance, which was worth it but decided on a prompt

retirement. When Mr. Knill emerged his tormentor was gone, nor did he see him again, though he crashed noisily through the whole of the wood, and climbed on to the ridge of the down above it.

Meanwhile Crichton had doubled back in the opposite direction, and, skirting the wood, went back to college round the opposite side of the farm valley, and took his snakes to Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith was very pleased with the snakes, and asked Crichton if he knew of any lizards. Crichton said he did, also of other animals, and felt sure of his necessary bathing privileges. But he knew better than to ask leave at once. He was never in a hurry, and, having sown good seed, was content to let it bear fruit in its own good time.

Fruit of a kind matured rather sooner than he expected. That same evening his house master sent for him. Mr. Vasker was a mild-tempered gentleman as a rule, but on this occasion he seemed almost on the verge of being annoyed.

"Er—Crichton," he said, "I wanted to speak to you." He refreshed his memory from a piece of paper. "Yes, a most serious matter. Mr. Knill has been to the Head, and behaved in a most intemperate manner. He says that several boys were on his land to-day, and that one of them wore Fifteen colours and had car—er, reddish hair."

Crichton smiled. His hair was the colour of a new penny, and he was quite used to hearing it described as carrots.

"Most intemperate he was," went on Mr. Vasker. "I do not think there is another boy in the Fifteen with your coloured hair; but, in addition, I hear from Mr. Smith that you brought him some snakes to-day, which you caught at the top of Knill's Bottom."

"That's so, sir," said Crichton. "But I caught them above the boundary fence. Of course, I don't know if any fellows were on Mr. Knill's land, but I didn't see anyone anywhere near where I was. And as for myself, I don't quite understand how Mr. Knill can say he saw me on his land."

The house master muttered something. Crichton was not sure, but he thought it was an uncomplimentary reference to the irascible farmer, and he felt encouraged.

"Oh, yes," went on Mr. Vasker, glancing again at the paper. "He also accuses you of breaking his fences."

Crichton laughed.

"I saw him break one himself," he said, and described the occurrence.

Mr. Vasker disliked Mr. Knill. As a house master, he found his reports a nuisance, and he was so amused by Crichton's account of his mishap that he quite forgot to ask Crichton direct if he had been on Mr. Knill's land at all. Instead he said:—

"I understand from Mr. Smith that you have found a badger's earth in the upper wood."

"Well, I think so, sir," said Crichton.

"That's interesting. You seem to be a clever woodsman, Crichton. An excellent thing, so long as you avoid trespassing."

Crichton heaved a sigh of relief when he got outside. He had been on very thin ice all the time, and knew that if a confession had been forced from him he would certainly have been gated, which meant no bathing also, probably for weeks.

"That settles it," he said. "I'd no quarrel with the great Panjandrum, but if he goes on the warpath, and gives me such a time as that, I must also look up my paint and feathers and tomahawks. Also, I'd better hunt up Mocky. He's always useful."

II

"Mocky," said Crichton. "Are you any good at playing Indians, or do geniuses prefer——"

"Shut up," said Mockler, looking hard at a test-tube. He added something from a bottle to its contents, on which it fizzed and gave off a strong odour, which seemed to please Mockler quite a good deal. "Just as I thought," he muttered. "Playing Indians? Oh, I see. Funny idiot!"

Mockler, like Crichton, was country raised, and resented the slur on his abilities.

"Don't be peevish. I'm only leading up to my grand proposition," said Crichton. "Do you love the great Panjandrum—vulgarly, very vulgarly, known as Knill?"

"Sweep!" said Mockler. "Collared me tickling a trout under his bridge below the wood."

"I hope you caught the trout."

"Had to swim for it."

"And the trout beat you, I suppose? However, it doesn't matter. It so happens I was thinking of that very bridge. It's pretty rotten, isn't it?"

"Some. Been there since the year one."

"Or longer. Well, do you think you could make it practicable? A low-comedy bridge, so to speak."

Mockler wiped his hands, and looked up. The aspect of the quiet seeker after knowledge disappeared, and the light of war kindled in

his eyes. He knew Crichton well, and quite understood his meaning.

"Bet your life," he said.

"Well, make it so," said Crichton, and gave his reasons, adding, "I've got to teach that it doesn't pay to monkey with me, even if I have got carroty hair."

"What's the scheme, then?"

"We must get off cricket, which we can easily manage. First there's the bridge to see to, and that's where we've got to play heap big Indians. Next, we let him know we're there; he's sure to come blundering after us, and then—unfortunate accident to a respected fellow-townsman. It isn't deep enough to drown him, is it?"

"Wish it were."

"Bloodthirsty mechanic! But I'm not sure. However, I'll be merciful. Good, Mockler. Tuesday next we will spare the house the infliction of our presence in the character of flannelled fools, and will go on the warpath instead."

Games were strictly compulsory, of course, but it was not difficult for two big fellows—both hopeless as cricketers—to get off on the plea of going bug-hunting. The plea was a perfectly valid one, except that the bug was a badger, for Crichton meant to have another look at the earth he had spoken of on the way.

They went by a roundabout route, well out of sight of Knill's ground, finally arriving downhill at the hillock. Here Crichton hid his Fifteen blazer and cap, and put on an ordinary school cap, and they then began to play Indians in earnest. They reconnoitred carefully, and, when satisfied that the coast was clear, went through Mr. Knill's gap, and down through the wood, stopping finally just inside its edge. They scanned the long valley below them. The bridge was about thirty yards away, lying deep and out of sight of the long pasture beyond it. The upper brook joined the main stream just below it, through a deep-cut channel. In the distance Mr. Knill was visible, busy among mangel-

An exclamation of horror escaped the boys as they peered out. For the farmer was dancing with rage on the bank, while waist deep in the water stood the natural history master.

wurzels, but there was no one within a quarter of a mile of them.

"This is where we get busy," said Crichton. "I'll watch from here, and if I see anyone coming, I'll yelp like a dog in pain. Carry on, Mocky."

Mocky's preparations, as he had to work in the water, consisted in stripping to a pair of bathing-drawers. Then, hanging his tools round his neck by string loops, he dropped into the deep channel of the upper brook, and in a few moments was under the bridge.

Crichton had no occasion to yelp, and in about an hour Mockler returned.

"Done it," he said. "What's next?"

"Get dressed, and we'll go and draw his fire. The gods send he remembers my crown of glory! Then the great Panjandrum will have the bath of his life."

The two boys went back and leant over the fence overlooking the field in which Mr. Knill was engaged. As soon as they were quite sure he had seen them, they ducked, and then went up the hill, running half doubled up, bobbing up every now and then in the traditional fashion of the incapable "scout," who does not—though it is hard to believe—want to be seen by anyone. Of course, Knill saw them; he could not very well have helped doing so. He also saw Crichton's Fifteen colours, and brilliant hair, which he well remembered. Naturally he decided that they had designs on his land, and equally naturally determined to catch "the young ruffians on the hop." But with ponderous cunning he decided not to move at once, but to "let 'em get into it with both feet," which suited Crichton and Mockler to perfection.

They reached the hillock, and, climbing up it, looked down. The bridge was visible and the pasture beyond; but as yet no signs of Knill. Then they had a surprise.

"Ah, Crichton, I thought I should find you here! I want to see the badger's earth. Do you think there are any cubs?"

It was Mr. Smith, F.R.S., etc., who had taken it into his head to follow Crichton. He wanted badger cubs badly, and was curious about the earth.

"Well, I can't be sure, sir," said Crichton; "but I think so. It's down this way. Shall you dig them out, sir?"

"I thought we might do so one night soon," replied Mr. Smith. "But I wanted to see the place by daylight first. Ah, I see!"

Just as they left the hillock, Crichton had seen Mr. Knill moving like an elephant in a hurry across the fields towards the bridge. Consequently, as he wanted to see the final act of the tragedy, he tried to hurry Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith did not notice that Crichton was trying to do so, but he was too interested to be hurried.

"Yes, I think you're right," said Mr. Smith, after a prolonged examination. "The earth has all the signs of being in use. We will dig it out on Saturday evening—you, Mockler, and myself."

"Thank you, sir," said Crichton.

"I should like to see the snake covert," went on Mr. Smith; "but I have no time now. The Head has desired me to go and speak to Mr. Knill, and I must go on down. There is a bridge over the stream, is there not?"

Crichton's face showed no signs of the consternation within him. The great Panjandrum should have reached the bridge some time before, but they had heard no crash or bad language. Evidently he had been delayed on the way. He dared not warn Mr. Smith openly, but if he reached the bridge first——! Crichton did not care to think of the prospect. He liked Mr. Smith.

"Yes, there is, sir," he said, carelessly. "But it looks rotten and dangerous."

"Thank you for the warning," replied Mr. Smith. "I will be careful. Which is the best way down."

"There's a stile to the right, sir," said Crichton, starting to walk in that direction. "I'll show you the way. I expect the path leads down to the bridge."

The stile was a quarter of a mile away, and would have saved the situation. But, by bad luck, Mr. Smith saw the gap in the stake and binder.

"That will do for me," he said. "Good day."

"There simply isn't a word for it, Mocky," said Crichton, when Mr. Smith had gone. "What can have kept that beastly Panjandrum back? We're in the cleftest of cleft sticks."

"What's the odds?" said Mockler. "Can't spot that anyone's been at the thing. We're safe."

"That's not the point. Thing is, that poor old Smithy'll drop into it, and he's too good a sort, and we simply can't do anything."

"Cheer up," said Mockler. "Warm day for a dip. Let's go and see the fun."

But before they reached the hillock they heard the crash and splash they were expecting, followed by a series of roars there was no mistaking.

"Oh, hooray, hooray!" said Crichton, with a sigh of relief. "The great Panjandrum wins

by a neck. I'd give something to be with Smithy now."

They scrambled up the hillock and looked down. Then an exclamation of horror broke from both of them. The bridge was in ruins, and standing waist deep in the brook was—not the great Panjandrum, but Mr. Smith! The great Panjandrum was on the bank, dancing and shaking his stick and fist, and, as far as they could judge, roaring out inquiries as to what Mr. Smith meant by damaging his property and making a hole in his water.

III

NEVER before had Mockler or anyone else seen Crichton so completely cast down. For many days it was hardly safe to approach him. Mr. Smith appeared to look upon the accident as rather a joke than otherwise; but neither that nor the securing of three badger cubs on Saturday evening could console Crichton. Strangest of all, he seemed to have forgotten all about Knill.

About a week later an uncle, who had been in Mexico for the past two years, came unexpectedly to see him. Crichton entertained him royally in Palgrave's study, as was his way with his relatives. He said he always found it the most profitable course in the long run. What passed between them, of course, no one knew; but the effect was the banishing of his gloom. He became himself again, recovered his usual spirits, and, on the next opportunity —to the relief of his cricket captain—he cut games, and made Mockler do likewise, to catch adders for Mr. Smith in the forest above the college.

They had caught one alive by the simple trick of getting it to strike a stick wrapped in cloth, and were on their way home, when they saw what looked like a bundle of old clothes in their path. But as they went towards it the bundle moved, and when they reached it they found a wrinkled old woman, clad in rusty black rags, and clasping a bunch of herbs in one skinny hand. They knew her at once. She was Peg, the badger woman—which is a kind of witch—a well-known character about the town, whose magic powers were firmly believed in by herself, and by more people than cared to own to the belief.

The boys got some water, and in a few minutes she sat up.

"Blessings on ye," she said. "I might 'a' lain there all night but for you young gentlemen, and night dews are hard on old bones."

"Can't you charm them away, Peggy?" said Crichton. "Do you feel better?"

"There be things we can't do," she said, wagging her old head solemnly. "Yes, I be better. I'll be getting along home now."

But after going a few steps she tottered, and would have fallen if Crichton had not caught her in his arms.

"No go, Peggy," he said. "We'll have to help you. Where do you live?"

"Top of Figgin's Lane. But surely you college gents are never going to help old Peggy there? What'll folk say?"

"What they jolly well like," said Crichton, and meant it. "How are you going to get home without us? Take her other arm, Mocky. Now, Peggy, off we go. Lean well on us, and we'll get along like smoke."

The two boys helped the poor old woman to her door, and were turning to go when she called them back. Thinking she wanted money Crichton put his hand in his pocket.

"Put that back," she said. "I'll take nor gold nor silver nor copper from you, Mr. Crichton. Ah," she went on, with a cackling laugh, as Crichton started. "Old Peggy knows who you are, and a bit more, aye! For instance, there's a stout man, as walks like a cart-horse and talks like a bull, you'd be glad to get even with. Old Peggy'll do that for you, and anything else she can, for what you've done for her to-day."

To Mockler's utter surprise, Crichton took her quite seriously.

"Good scheme, Peggy," he said. "Could you overlook his cattle? Cast them into an enchanted sleep?"

"Aye, that I can, and gladly. He's a cruel man. He turned me out of his wood, where I was looking for herbs, same as to-day. I'll cast a spell upon him and his."

"Tell him," said Crichton, "and let his men know, too, that if he goes on like he is, his cattle will go mad before the end of the term. But give him a chance. If he stops raving about chaps trespassing, let him off."

"Clean dotty," said Mockler, as they went away.

"Quite right. All his cows and sheep," said Crichton.

"No, you," returned Mockler. "Of all the crack-brained——"

"Mocky," said Crichton, "don't make any mistake about it. If the great P. doesn't learn wisdom his cattle will be put under a spell."

"Sack for you, sure thing."

"Why? Why should I be suspected, any

more than I was over that jolly little old ghost? And this is Peggy's pigeon. By the bye, they never found our properties when they had the floor up, nor yet the entrance. I wonder if they are practicable still. I must have a look."

"Suppose you can't help looking for trouble," growled Mockler. "Idiot! Well, what's the game? And what am I to do? I suppose I'll have to butt in too."

"Not this time. Peggy and I can do all that's necessary. No, I won't say anything. But I'll explain afterwards. Healthier for you not to know. It's thin ice."

The two boys were turning to go when the badger woman called them back.

If Farmer Knill had only known Crichton and had seen him daily, he would have given up his hobby. Crichton was so guileless and light hearted, that old enemies like Lloyd grew quite nervous lest he should be planning some unprovoked outrage. But nothing happened, as the scorching hot, rainless weeks passed, and Mockler would have thought that Crichton's promises had been empty bluff, except that he knew that Crichton never threatened without carrying out his threat, no matter how long he might have to wait. Then, one extra scorching afternoon, not long after a particularly imaginative report from Mr. Knill, the blow fell on that misguided man.

The first sign of the trouble was the bellowing of the excitable farmer from a field of clover just below the college field fence. He had given orders that a flock of sheep were to be moved from that ground, but when his men came to do so, they found the whole flock fast asleep. This was hardly usual in the middle of the day, but nothing to be alarmed about. When, however, they tried to arouse the sheep, and found that by no manner of means could they do so, the men began to feel nervous. They felt more nervous still when Mr. Knill came out, to inquire in his customary manner as to why they had not shifted the sheep.

Then trouble fell thick and fast. During the hot weather very little work was done during the heat of the day, and no one had noticed the falling of the calamity. A shout from a far-off field eventually proved to mean that a horse which had been wanted for work was likewise fast asleep—and snoring—and would not be roused; and not only that one, but three others in the same field were sound asleep. The climax came when it was discovered that the cows also, instead of going in like well-behaved milk machines, preferred to lie out and doze in the fields.

Mr. Knill surpassed himself, but without any success, while not less than half the college cheered him from the fence. Cows, sheep, and horses slept on peacefully, and at last his men began to whisper together about something old Peggy had recently said. Presently the whispers came to the master's ears, provoking a fresh effort. But this time his work was unconvincing, and lacked real vim. He was plainly troubled, and at last gave up and retired to his house, the men dispersing in a hurry as soon as he was gone. They were enlightened and intelligent twentieth century voters, members of the sovereign people, but they did not hanker at all after remaining anywhere near the scene of the witch's spell. If Peggy could put cattle to sleep, what might she not do to humans?

"This is the day when we have a really number one brew," said Crichton, as he and Mockler went down to college. "The great Panjandrum is paid in full. His cattle, as Peggy promised, have been put under a spell, and his men'll probably leave him. They all believe firmly in Peggy, and so should you do, you unbelieving genius."

"Rats!" said Mockler. "You did it—I know that. But I'm blessed if I can see how."

"Nor will anyone else, except my dear uncle from Mexico," said Crichton.

"Rot! He never did it."

"He did; at least, he gave me the means," said Crichton. "It was stiff, but it wasn't only our little affair. Knill's been a beastly nuisance to us all from the Head down for years. He's only got what he's been asking for, which is loco weed."

"Loco weed! Mad weed! What's that?"

"An interesting product of the warmer parts of North America, including Mexico," replied Crichton. "My uncle had brought home seeds for some botanical jokers, and gave me a good dollop of them. He suggested it when I told him about Knill. It really makes the beasts drunk. They'll get over it all right."

"But how did you get the seeds there?"

"Remember our priest's hole? I found that it includes a secret way out of the house down the thickness of the wall. I used that one dark night, and planted my seeds in the clover and those two pastures. It was a ticklish job, and the watchman nearly caught me. It might not have come off but for the scorching weather. However, all's well that ends well."

"But it'll go on growing," said Mockler "He'll never get it out of his land. Besides, it'll spread."

"No, it won't," said Crichton. "I wouldn't have used it if I hadn't been quite sure of that. It can't seed in England, and the first rain or cold weather will kill it all. By the way, there's a storm coming up now. I wasn't sure how to bring it off, till Peggy cleared the way for me. Now the great Panjandrum is done for. He knows that Peggy cast a spell on him, and he's just about scared stiff. He won't trouble us any more."

He did not, though his cattle all woke up duly—perhaps with headaches, but otherwise none the worse—some few hours later, when the storm burst. Also, it must be recorded that Crichton was not the only person to be satisfied with the result. A few days later the Head and Mr. Smith were talking over the affair.

"By the bye, Smith," said the Head. "Do you know that Knill came to me that evening and apologised abjectly for all the trouble he had given me, and hoped I'd excuse him?"

"Good gracious!" said Smith. "Has he gone off his head like the cows?"

"Pretty nearly," said the Head. "Old Peggy gave him the worst scare of his life."

"Oh, I heard something about that," said Smith. "But it's all nonsense, of course."

"Not when you consider that Crichton and Mockler, like the two good chaps they are, helped her home one day when she was ill."

Mr. Smith began to see daylight dimly.

"You don't know Crichton as I do," laughed the Head. "Alone he is about the most ingenious young rascal I've ever known, and when he uses Mockler's brains, I pity whoever may be up against him. I'm positive that he could explain the witch's spell."

"But how could he have done it?"

"I don't know, and I'm not going to ask him. But whatever he did, he deserves a testimonial. Knill's been the plague of my life for years, and, strictly unofficially, I'm grateful to whoever has taught him sense."

SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, LONDON

Am I Oxford or Cambridge?—Inquisitive correspondents—girls, too, some of them—have been asking that question persistently during the last month or so. Scarcely a day's post has come in but among the pile of always welcome letters are one or two which commence or end with the blunt inquiry as to the shade of blue I sport on those great days when the rival 'Varsities meet in athletic contests. Am I Oxford? Am I Cambridge? The only fit reply that I can make is in the Parliamentary method, "The answer, my honourable friends, is in the negative!"

No answer at all, that, you say—only a very cowardly way of shelving the question! Yet as a matter of fact it very accurately represents my attitude in the Battle of the Blues; my favouritism is absolutely a negative quantity. I am neither Cambridge nor Oxford. So long as I can recollect I have been free of any violent partisanship for either, and even in those dim and distant days at school when furious footer struggles took place between rabid adherents of the Dark Blues and Light they invariably chose me as referee, because of my known impartiality, I suppose; or sometimes allotted me that glorious position and wonderful invention of some playing-ground genius known as Jack-o'-both-sides! And more and more as the years have crept upon me have their sobering influence enabled me to hold the balance even—to watch, to judge, to enjoy all the more closely and all the more fully, because I desire nothing than that the best team should win. The Cambridge eight passing the post at Mortlake half a length in front of their rivals gives me as great a thrill and just as much pleasure as the sight of the Oxford three-miler in the last race at Queen's Club just getting home by a few yards, and by his win giving his team the victory by a single event; whichever side at Lord's is fighting for a few runs on the last day, and with most wickets down, matters not to me so long as their end is attained, or *almost* deserved. I like to see them at grips, the 'Varsities, and at close grips, too. The keener the struggle, the narrower the margin of victory, the better, to my mind. The interests of sport are best served when the records of the contestants run level; a long series of runaway victories would eventually kill enthusiasm, and though it is in the last degree improbable that either 'Varsity at any sport would become so proficient that it were not worth the while of the other to challenge it, yet I am always glad at these annual encounters to see the victors of the previous year vanquished. That is why I wanted Cambridge to win the Boat Race, and why I trust to see Oxford successful at Lord's this year. Am I Oxford or Cambridge? Well, perhaps it is wrong to say I am neither; I am the hearty well-wisher of both.

Some of you by now have achieved fame by carrying off prizes in your school sports, and others are still looking forward to gaining such honours in the course of the next few weeks. (Don't, by the way, forget to send in the results to our "Sports Fag," who is tabulating a list of winners for early publication.) Whether you have managed to break the tape first or chanced to have been the last to tread it into the ground, you may rest happy in the fact that, if you have followed Mr. F. A. M. Webster's advice faithfully and well, your training has been along the right lines. In these pages you

will find a photograph of Mr. Webster demonstrating his views to the Cambridge athletes, whom he was specially invited to coach. His series of articles are brought to a conclusion in this number, and I am quite sure that for many years to come fellows desirous of achieving successes at sports will search through the volumes of this magazine to read the excellent advice contained in "The Way to Win." Mr. Webster paid one of his periodical visits to my office but an hour or so before

Mr. F. A. M. Webster, author of "The Way to Win," giving Cambridge athletes some practical hints on hurdle jumping.

I sat down to satisfy the printer's craving for this monthly chat of mine—*you* may read "The Old Fag" with a certain lazy interest, but the man who manipulates the mono. is simply never happy till he gets it—and I took the opportunity of asking him—Mr. Webster, you know, not the printer this time—what he really considered the essential points in training. I rather expected him to say that he had thrashed all that out in his articles, and perhaps it did seem a rather risky question to put to a man who is so handy with the javelin. But F.A.M.W. is an enthusiast through and through, and he is tremendously keen on seeing Britain regain the place she once held, *facile princeps*, among nations in sport. And in his opinion it is through the schools that it must come about.

"The great fault," he said, "in our English public schools is that practice does not begin soon enough.

"For the first week the work should be very light, to avoid stiffness and soreness in the muscles. The body must be built up and the muscles brought into tone gradually by physical exercises before any track work is attempted; the remarks I have made in my series of articles as to arm work will show you how necessary it is to develop the upper part of the body by work in the gymnasium. For this purpose I would strongly recommend the exercises set forth in Lieutenant Muller's book, 'My System.'

"To the schoolboy especially I would say, do not pick on one particular event and specialise in that; but try many events until you find your *forte*. It is quite time enough to specialise when your schooldays are over, and you go into serious athletics at your university or athletic club; also, the all-round work you will get in many branches of athletics will be beneficial in building up your physique against the days when you come to take one or two events really seriously.

"The basis of all success in athletics is speed, no matter what the event or distance may be; therefore I say to you, whether you are a field event man or a long-distance runner — sprint, and keep on sprinting. With all events you must have that vital and essential snap when it comes to a hard-fought finish; but, above all, never do things in a slipshod manner. Take just as much pains to learn how to run a 'hundred' as you do to acquire the right method of 'cutting' at cricket.

"If your style is wrong, work and study until you are able to change it. While you are changing from one style to another the results are bound to be disappointing, but when correct form is ultimately attained your performances will improve in such a way as to well repay you for all past disappointments, and the trouble you have taken to change your style.

"The best possible way to attain proficiency in athletics is to watch first-class men at work; so never miss an opportunity of attending a sports meeting where well-known athletes are competing if you can help it. By seeing such men you will rapidly pick up the rudiments of the game.

"No special diet is necessary for the schoolboy athlete; his wind is usually in very sound condition from the continual playing of games. Such things as sweets, pastry, and new bread should, however, be avoided, and boiled meats are always better than baked for the athlete in training. The schoolboy athlete's diet may be shortly summed up as good food and plenty of it.

"Finally, I would say to you *don't smoke.* It is a bad enough habit for a grown man to acquire, but to the schoolboy who has not got his growth or strength it is fatal. The boy who smokes will never be a great athlete, for smoking prevents both body and brain from giving of their best just at the crucial moment, when only the best will serve."

— — —

Martin Rattler and the Cow Tree.—Last month a correspondent made the suggestion that the tree mentioned in "Martin Rattler" from which a fluid like milk exudes was really a rubber tree, in which case the "milk" obtained by Martin and his companion, far from being a good food, would probably cause indigestion of a particularly painful kind. Now R. M. Ballantyne finds a friendly advocate in another correspondent, Mr. R. Davison, who kindly sends me an old and (I gather) rare volume of "Curtis's Botanical Magazine," drawing my attention to a description of the cow tree (or *palo de vaca*) of Caracas, Venezuela. This tree is first mentioned by the naturalist

Photo Sport & General.

The Old Fag's wish comes true! Cambridge bringing in their boat after beating Oxford for the first time since 1903.

Humboldt, who wrote: "For many weeks we had heard a great deal of a tree whose juice is a nourishing milk. The tree itself is called the cow tree, and we were assured that the negroes on the farm, who are in the habit of drinking large quantities of this vegetable milk, consider it as highly nutritive; an assertion which startled us the more as almost all lactescent vegetable fluids are acrid, bitter, and more or less poisonous." The reports, however, proved to be true. The tree is likened to the starapple tree, and "incisions made in the trunk are followed by a profuse flow of gluey and thickish milk, destitute of acridity, and exhaling a very agreeable balsamic odour. It was offered to us in calabashes, and though we drank large quantities of it . . . . we experienced no uncomfortable effects." This testimony was corroborated later by Sir Robert Ker Porter, who detected a slight bitterness in the taste of the milk. The trunk of the tree which he tested measured just over twenty feet in circumference at five feet from the root. The stem ran up without leaf or branch to a height of sixty feet, rising to an additional forty feet covered with foliage. The leaves were of a dark and polished green, resembling the laurel, from ten to sixteen inches long and two or three inches wide.

So Ballantyne seems to have been justified, and the doubt that came all the way from Singapore must be expunged from the records.

Answers to Correspondents

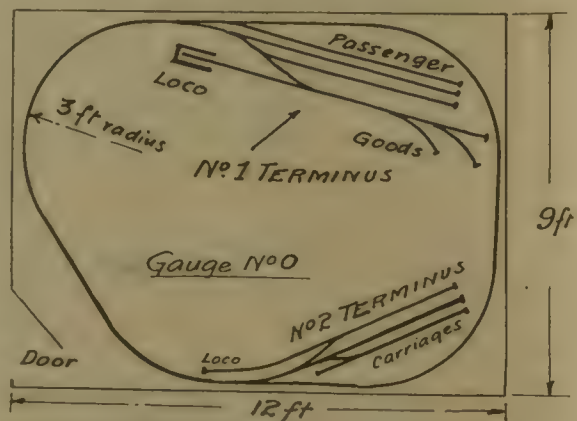
London and South-Western.—We have already treated the subject in an article entitled "Locomotive Head-lights," published in our number for February, 1908.

Curious (Streatham).—In the Trades Section of the London Directory you will find the addresses of many coin dealers whom you could ask to value your collection.

H. M. B., writing with enthusiasm after a match in which the O.B.'s were defeated in the last minute by four to three, for the first time in eight years, tells me that the Latymer Upper School Soccer eleven have won twenty-two of the twenty-three matches played, the other being drawn—a fine achievement, in view of the strength of some of the opposing teams. The second eleven has also done well, winning sixteen against four losses, two games being drawn.

Hendonite.—Ten matches played and all won is a splendid record, especially following a cricket season in which nine matches out of ten were won, and the boys of Hendon Preparatory School are to be heartily congratulated. Glad to hear that the prospects for the coming season are so bright.

F. J. Girling.—(1) "Clubbed" by post. (2) Up to the time of going to press Pennyfarthing has done nothing further worth writing about, but we are keeping an eye on this young man, and will act as his future conduct demands. (3) The plan reproduced on this page for a gauge o indoor railway provides for both station-to-station working and continuous running, as required by clockwork and steam locomotives respectively.

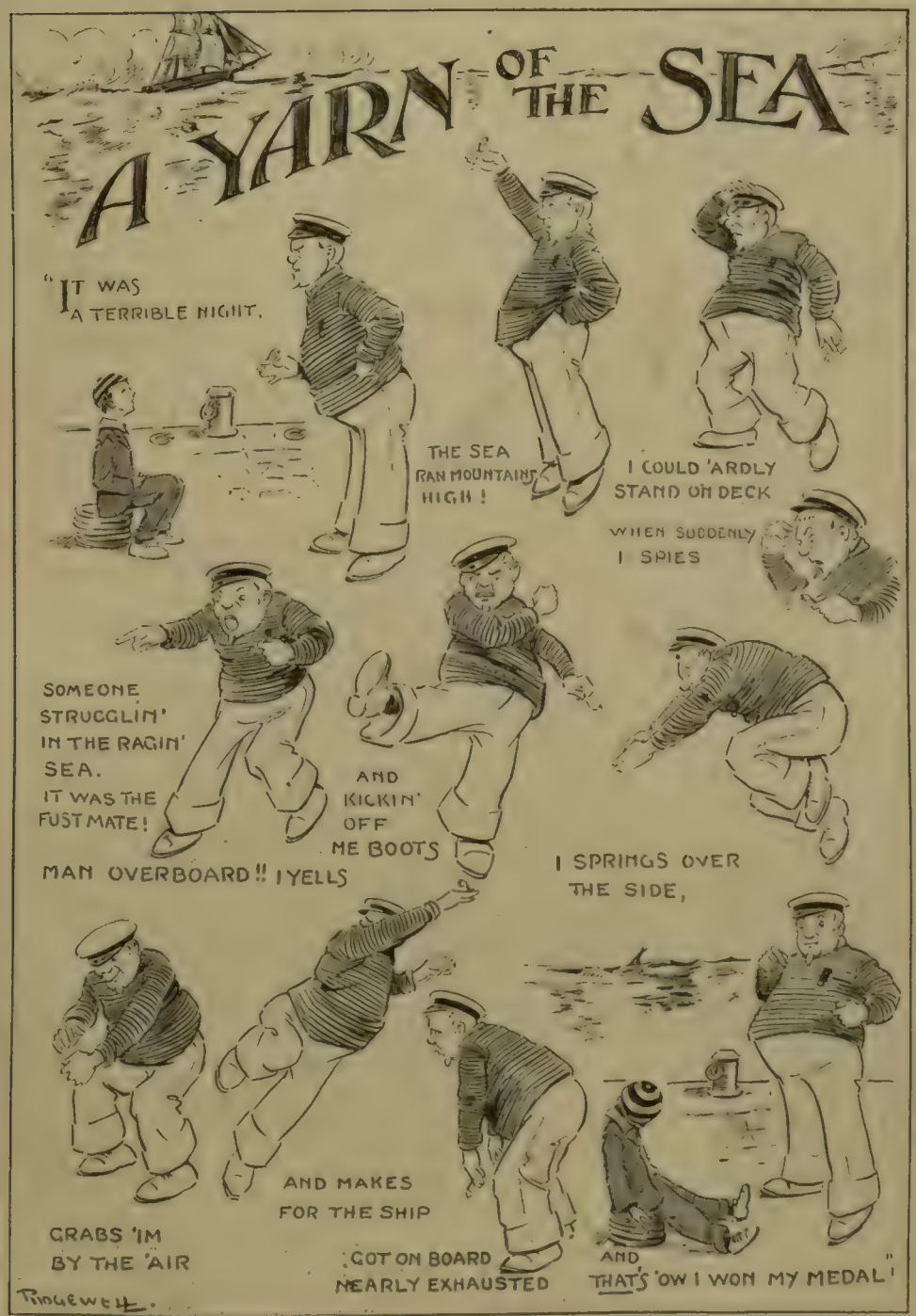


A suggested plan for a gauge o indoor railway, suitable for a room twelve feet by nine feet.

Ambitious Chick.—I really cannot prescribe any course of training for the imagination, but at fourteen you can hardly expect to have the range of a Dickens or a Scott. The quality will improve as you grow. Variety of experience is certainly helpful, yet much good work has been done by authors whose outward life has been exceedingly uneventful. But if your only trouble is that you get "stuck" in the middle of a story after a promising start, the weakness is in invention rather than imagination, and may very likely disappear with practice and experience. The end of the story—the whole plot, in fact—should be in your mind before you begin to write.

Acknowledgments and thanks are also due to **R. R. Wembrow, Walter Woods, R. W. Fraser, T. C.** (Lewes), **F. N. Green, Enthuslast, New Captainite** (Truro), **Hobart, L. Leonard.**

THE OLD FAG.


A YARN OF THE SEA
"IT WAS A TERRIBLE NIGHT.
THE SEA RAN MOUNTAINS HIGH!
I COULD 'ARDLY STAND ON DECK
WHEN SUDDENLY I SPIES
SOMEONE STRUGGLIN' IN THE RAGIN' SEA. IT WAS THE FUST MATE!
AND KICKIN' OFF ME BOOTS!
MAN OVERBOARD!! I YELLS
I SPRINGS OVER THE SIDE,
GRABS 'IM BY THE 'AIR
AND MAKES FOR THE SHIP
GOT ON BOARD NEARLY EXHAUSTED
AND THAT'S 'OW I WON MY MEDAL"
Pinguet

The seven broke from the shelter of the rocks, and, before the excited Spaniards knew what had happened, seized the cannon, and rushed it towards the gates.

THE TRAITOR AT THE HELM

A TALE OF SPANISH WRECKERS

By W. BOURNE COOKE

Illustrated by Paul Hardy

IN the days of Queen Elizabeth, when Spain and England were at bitter enmity, but before the destruction of the great Armada had for ever settled which of them should hold supremacy upon the water, an English ship, the *Ajax*, ploughed slowly through the western seas.

The night was black as pitch, without a star to light the darkness overhead, and as the great, unwieldy vessel crawled along before a light south-western breeze, the silence was profound, with nothing save the ghostly creak of spars and the lapping of the sea against the bows to break it.

On the high poop, which towered above the lower deck, stood the commander, Captain Richard Strong—one of those big-limbed, bronzed-faced men of Devon, whose hardihood had often filled the brave, but softer, Spaniards with dismay, by reason of that dogged pluck which never seemed to know when it was beaten. Leaning with his arms upon the taffrail he gazed into the darkness with a puzzled anxious look. Beside him stood his son—a tall, slim, fair-haired youth just over sixteen years of age. His eager, handsome face was turned towards his father, whom he watched in silence for a time, then spoke.

"Whither are we going, sir?" he asked.

The captain started round as though awakened from a dream, and for a moment frowned like one who, having thought himself alone, resented this disturbance of his reverie; then his face softened and he answered, wearily:—

"Whither are we going, lad, ye ask? Would that I knew myself. But there's the rub. What with these fog-bound seas, a faulty compass, and these starless nights, I scarce know where we are; nor, methinks, would any sailor, howsoe'er experienced he were. But look ye, Harry, despite all hindrances and perils, I swear we will accomplish that for which we sailed from merry England. That is, to spoil the Spaniards."

The boy was silent for a moment; his mind went back to Devon: to a home among great orchards, where, even then, the apple trees were thick with glorious blossom. To a mother who had fought to keep back tears at his departure, to a little sister who had clung to him and sobbed. He saw it all again as in a flash, and then the stern truth of his present state came back upon him—the dark, impenetrable night, the mournful sighing of the wind, the hidden dangers that beset this ship and those aboard her so far away from England. This was his first long voyage, he had begged to be allowed to come; but now, in the darkness, on those unknown seas—strange even to his father!—his heart misgave him, as he thought of other goodly vessels which had sailed from Devon never to return.

"Sir, what were you thinking of just now," he asked, "when I disturbed you?"

"Thinking of?" echoed the captain, with a laugh. "Why, many things, lad—home for one."

"Ah! so was I," rejoined the boy, with a wistful look into the darkness. "What if we never saw it more!"

Again the captain started, and looked uneasily at Harry.

"Come now, talk not like that," he said. "Surely this never-ending darkness hath got hold of thee. What ails thee? Art afraid?"

"Nay; that I am not, sir," replied the lad, drawing himself up proudly. "But I sometimes wonder if 'tis worth the risk to come so far from home in search of gold."

"Yes, by my life it is!" cried Captain Strong. "'Tis worth all risk to singe King Philip's beard, kill Spanish dogs, and win their treasure."

"But what if we do neither, sir?"

"Why, then we'll go home again, and hope for better luck next time. But say, lad, what possesses thee that thou art thus as gloomy as the sky above us—you who, till to-day, were the brightest thing aboard this ship? Hath anything occurred to trouble thee?"

"Yes, sir, it has."

"Ah! And what? Speak freely, as a son to father."

"Why, sir," replied the boy, sinking his voice into a whisper, "I greatly doubt the man who now stands at the helm."

"What—doubt Jan Veem, the Dutchman?" cried the captain, laughing. "Ho, ho! lad, thou art surely in the grip of some black witch to-day! Jan is as true as this good sword of mine, and a better seaman ne'er trod deck. Certes, he is a foreigner, and hath even something of a Spanish look, but that is his misfortune, not his fault. Nay, I would trust him with my very life. But, say, what makes ye doubt him?"

"Why, this, sir," answered Harry, more solemnly than ever; "yesternight I dreamed that someone had betrayed us to the Spaniards who were going to kill us all. I woke up cold with fear; I could not sleep, nor yet forget my dream. At last I crept out on the deck, and there I saw Jan Veem, who kept the watch, crouching beneath the lee-side of the ship. A lanthorn burned beside him, and on his knees there lay a parchment, which he studied like a miser counting out his gold. With one finger he was tracing lines thereon, the while he muttered darkly to himself. I crept on noiselessly, until I saw that what he studied was some kind of chart with rocks, and sea, and ships upon it. Just then he glanced up suddenly and saw me; and I shall ne'er forget the look he gave me as he crumpled up the parchment, stuffed it beneath his jerkin, and went skulking forward. If he be not up to mischief, then, sir, 'tis a marvel, for his hang-down look was such as made me think of thieving dogs."

"Oh, poor Jan Veem!" laughed Captain Strong; "thou hast a sorry character indeed! Harry, my son, thou surely wast but half awakened from thy horrid dream, and so took honest Jan for some black traitorous Spaniard. He was but studying the chart of these wretched seas. Remember he is sailing-master. Still, to set thy mind at rest I will inquire into this thing to-morrow. Now to your cabin, lad; sleep peacefully and have no fear, but dream of dear old Devon."

With that he clapped Harry on the shoulder, and the latter, with his mind still far from satisfied, had turned to go; when the captain started violently, and pointing seaward, said:—

"Look! Didst see that light, Harry?"

"Nay, sir, I saw no light," replied the boy, following the direction of his father's outstretched hand. "What kind of light?"

"A curious light that flashed out for a moment and was gone."

"Perchance it was the death fires that you used to tell me of as being in these lonely seas," rejoined the other with a quaver in his voice.

"Nay, lad, 'twas nothing of the kind," retorted Captain Strong, uneasily. "It shone aloft, as if 'twere in the sky—look, look! There it is again!"

No doubt about it this time. There straight ahead, high up, and seemingly quite close, a bright light broke the gloom and disappeared as quickly as it came.

"I like it not!" muttered the captain. "It may mean land! Yes, hark! methinks I even catch the moan of breakers! What ho, there, Jan!" he shouted, turning towards the helmsman who was hidden by the darkness. "Saw ye that light, man?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the ready answer. "I saw it right enough. Methinks it was a fireball, and naught else; ye get them in these waters, sir. I've seen my thousands!"

"Be none so sure of that! It might be land, and if so we are driving for it. Canst hear a sound like breakers?"

"Nay, sir, I hear no sound except the wind, which now hath freshened somewhat."

"Then art thou deaf as wood. Hark, man! 'Tis plainly to be heard, and grows clearer every moment. Down with your helm, I say, ere ill befall us."

Too late! for barely had he spoken when the slowly moving vessel grounded with a sickening sound of churning shingle, shuddered for a moment, then stopped dead, and listed heavily to leeward.

"Lost, lost!" cried Captain Strong, raising two mighty fists above his head, and uttering an awful oath. "Furl sails, ye frightened dogs," he thundered to the crowd of startled seamen who swarmed up from below, as though an evil spirit had expelled them. "And do thou fetch Jan Veem to me at once," he added, sharply, to his son. "The clumsy fool hath ruined me!"

Confusion reigned. What with the darkness and the suddenness of the catastrophe, the ship, which but a minute earlier had been silent as a grave, was now a pandemonium of bewildered, horror-stricken men, who, though brave as lions when it came to fighting, were terrified in face of such an awful death as seemed to threaten them.

Through this seething, half-demented crowd, young Harry fought his way into the stern. The mighty helm swung idly to and fro, thus proving that the rudder had not grounded;

but there was no sign of Jan Veem, the steerer to destruction! Concluding, therefore, that he was among the crowd of frenzied seamen forwards, the boy was just about to turn away in search of him, when a dark, blurred figure sprang with tiger-like agility from behind a pile of sails, and reaching the bulwarks with a single bound, stood poised there for a moment in the light of the poop lantern.

"Jan Veem!" cried Harry, making a rush towards him; but even as he said the words, the man swung out upon a dangling rope and disappeared like lightning down the ship's side. Next instant Harry's knife had cut the rope. There was a heavy splash—then a sound of someone struggling in the water—then he heard no more. Returning to his father he told him breathlessly what he had seen.

"The coward dog!" hissed Captain Strong. "Either he is a traitor and hath betrayed us to the Spaniards, or else hath fled the ship for fear of punishment. The morn will tell us which. But there, we can do nothing till the light comes, save keep stout hearts and pray for Heaven's protection. Tell no one else of this."

* * * * *

There was no more rest that night for anyone aboard the stricken ship. The west wind whistled mournfully among her rigging, and spoke to many a brave heart of homes far off—in sunny Devon—as in the darkness everyone stood waiting for the dawn. For the present they were safe, at any rate; the ship was firm; the wind and sea were light; the shore could not be far away. The light would prove if any other perils awaited them.

At first the confusion was so great that Jan Veem's absence passed unnoticed; but it was not for long.

"Where is Jan Veem who brought us to this sorry pass?" cried one. "'Twas he who had the helm. I saw him at it just before we struck."

"Ah! and I heard the captain hail him from the poop about some light," put in another.

"Ay, and asked him if he heard the breakers, and bid him put the helm down hard!" exclaimed a third.

"Where is Jan Veem?"

Swiftly the question sped from mouth to mouth, but found no answer. His name was called aloud from stem to stern, and search was made, but nothing came of it.

"Maybe he's with the captain," suggested one.

"Nay, by my life, he is not," quoth a burly fellow, "for I have just come from the captain's cabin. He sits there bending o'er a map; his brow is thunderous; and there's no one with him save the lad."

"Perchance the helm knocked Jan into the water when the ship struck."

"Nay, that's impossible," rejoined the former speaker. "No helm could knock a man so high and far. Faith, but there is some ugly mystery about the thing. I like it not."

"Nor do I," growled a bronzed old mariner. "Methinks the captain should be told of it at once."

"Yes; but who's to tell him?" asked the one who had first spoken. "I wouldn't face that look of his again for anything. Nay, my masters, not for heaps o' Spanish gold. For, look you, friends, his countenance was like the evil one's, and woe betide the man as dares to bait our captain when he looks like that, Sol Gale."

"Nevertheless, I go," rejoined Sol firmly. "Why should I fear him—me as has sailed with him every voyage for twelve good years and more? Make way there!"

Shouldering a passage through the crowd, old Sol went boldly to his master's cabin. The captain still sat at the table; his gaze bent frowningly upon a map which lay spread out before him; while at his side stood Harry, watching anxiously the finger that went to and fro upon the parchment.

The captain flashed a fierce, inquiring glance at the intruder as he entered.

"Well, sirrah, and what brings you here?" he asked.

"By your leave, good sir," began Sol Gale with desperate haste, "but know you that Jan Veem is not aboard? We have been searching——"

He got no farther, for the captain smote the table with his fist, and cried:—

"Stop, fool! I know it. And know ye this, that I'll see to't that he never go aboard a ship again. Away with you, and let no one else break in upon me thus an he doth value life. Stay, sirrah! Take forth my orders that all weapons of whatsoever kind be instantly got ready. We may have goodly need of them when daylight comes," he added with a hard, grim smile. "Yes, by my life, we may. See ye to it that my commands are carried out with swiftness."

Sol hastened to obey, and with the captain's orders also spread abroad the news that by the look of things Jan Veem had sinned to death and fled for very life, though where and

how was past man's understanding to explain. Nor was there time to think of it just then, for now such a looking-out and furbishing of arms of every kind—muskets, petronels, swords, bows, poignards, and what not—broke out upon the ship, as kept all hands at work and left no room for idle speculation.

And with the first faint glimpse of dawn there came such knowledge and such understanding as astonished everyone, and made the boldest man draw in his breath. There, scarce a cannon shot away, a rocky precipice towered from the shore, surmounted by grim, battlemented walls, while over all the hated flag of Spain streamed proudly in the morning breeze.

At sight of it a fierce, defiant shout went up from nearly a hundred English throats. The Spaniards answered with a mocking cheer that made the captain's face turn white with rage. Drawing his sword he shook it at the faces dimly visible upon the heights and shouted :—

"Hearken, ye Spanish dogs! Ye think ye have us safely in the toils, but verily I swear ye have not! We will this day teach ye such a lesson as shall make your king and country fear the name of England more than ever!"

At that a deafening cheer arose aboard the *Ajax*; another mocking shout broke from the Spaniards. And as this noise of many voices rent the air, the skulking figure of a man appeared from behind a rock and ran, bent low, along the bottom of the cliffs.

"Behold, Jan Veem, the dog! the traitor!" went up the savage cry.

"Yes, by my life, 'tis he!" cried Captain Strong. "And whether he be blackest traitor, or a coward fleeing punishment, will soon be proven. Would that I had a hand on him, whichever it may be. But look! Yes, yes—a traitor sure enough, for, see, he knows the way—he turns, he mounts, he climbs—nay—but the villain shakes a fist at us! Yet hath he served us well, I trow, for where a traitor's feet have gone, good honest English ones may surely follow. But see, they show their teeth at last!" he added, as a loud report rang out, and a cannon ball came whistling above the ship. "Ye see their little game, my men. They think us helpless, as indeed we are so long as we remain aboard; for they will surely pound at us with yonder guns for which we make so good a mark, while we, by reason of the height, can do the dogs no harm."

As if to prove his words another shot crashed through the mizzen yard; and this was quickly followed by a third which swept across the very deck and took three hapless seamen with it.

"Did I not say so?" cried the captain with a wild light in his eyes. "This is too much a one-side game, my masters. It may not be. Shall we stand here to have our good ship riddled and ourselves shot down like poor dumb beasts by Spanish dogs? What say ye?"

"Nay, we will fight them! Kill them! Storm their citadel!" shouted the maddened seamen in reply.

"So be, it then; 'tis good plain English!" quoth the captain. "Yea, we would try to storm yon stronghold were it in the very clouds. Listen," he added, swiftly; "my plans are simple. The ship methinks will float again when lightened of our bodies and the tide comes in. Therefore, cast out the anchors that she may not drive in further. You twelve"—he named them—"will stay aboard the ship, so that if we win we may have boats to bring us back; while if we perish ye will try to make some friendly port. The rest will arm them to the teeth and follow me. The depth of water at the stern will scarce take the shortest man above his armpits, while twenty yards will bring us to the shallows. Now hasten every man! Moments are as hours at such a time as this. Look out! Here comes another ball! And—alack!—there goes Tom Pedrick! God rest him for a gallant seaman!"

And now, to the ceaseless booming of the Spanish guns, the preparations for assault went swiftly forward. Anchors were plunged overboard, cables tightened, arms quickly donned, and the English flag run to the masthead to the accompaniment of thundering hurrahs. When all was ready the captain drew his son aside and said :—

"Harry, had I listened to your warning yesternight, perchance this had not happened; but the past is gone. If I should fall to-day, lad, and ye get safely home again, tell them I died with honour as an Englishman, fighting for queen and country. Now for it, lads!" he cried, raising his sword and turning to his men. "When ye get overboard, spread out as much as possible that yonder guns may have less chance of hitting us. Let each man fight his best and bravest, and let our battle-cry be, 'England and the Queen!' Follow me, my men!"

Next moment they were swarming down into the water, on the far side of the vessel. This puzzled those upon the heights above and made them pause awhile; but when they

saw close on a hundred well-armed men come rushing through the water shorewards, with a mighty cheer that echoed in the cliffs, they understood, and opened fire again with every cannon, musket, petronel, and crossbow they possessed. Men fell fast, and here and there the clear green sea was tinged with red; but still the Englishmen swept forward in that resistless fashion which had made their name a terror to their foes.

Soon they reached the narrow strip of sandy shore, and so for the time were safe from

Even as he spoke young Harry Strong leapt back into the sea, reached the drowning seaman with three mighty bounds, and raised him in his arms. Others rushed out to help, and so, despite a hail of musketry, half carried and half dragged their wounded comrade into safety.

"Oh, woe is me!" groaned Sol, when they had bound up his wound, and placed him with his back against a rock; "that I may go no further in the fight. A plague upon the Spanish dog who hit me in the leg."

The cannon was rumbled to its place, and the gunners were about to light their matches when the English captain and his men swung round the bend and rushed upon them.

further danger. The price, however, had been heavy. Over twenty men had fallen in that fierce, brief rush; and as they gathered, breathing hard, beneath the shelter of the cliffs, there were not wanting those who mourned a fallen brother or a comrade, lost for ever.

"So far, so good; 'twas bravely done!" exclaimed the captain. "But, see! Who's that?" he added, pointing seaward where a head bobbed, struggling in the waves. "Why, if it be not old Sol Gale!"

"Nay, grumble not!" rejoined the captain, gently. "Thou hast done thy share, I trow, and wilt live to fight another day—which some will not."

"Truth, sir, that," growled Sol, "and 'twas bravely done by Master Harry. Yet would I dearly love to kill a Spanish dog or two this day. But get ye forward, sir. See! The hounds be firing at the ship again."

"Yes, and they'll splinter her, unless we give them something else to think about,"

rejoined the captain, grimly. "So now for the climb, my men; the path which that traitor hath made known to us! And, mark ye, Jan Veem must be caught alive! Now to death or victory!"

With a ringing cheer they followed; while shouts of "England for ever! Down with the Spaniards! England and good Queen Bess!" reached those behind the ramparts on the cliff-top, and made them marvel at what seemed like mad bravado in the face of heavy losses. But very soon they understood the meaning of it; for, with the captain at their head, the Englishmen went rushing up the rugged path as though it were no more than one of their native sheep-tracks. Yet even such impetuosity at last met with a check; the path grew steeper and more treacherous, so that the gallant little band was forced to climb with maddening slowness, perceiving which the Spaniards cheered derisively.

"Truly these English are blind, blundering fools!" exclaimed the governor, fingering his pointed beard. "They never know when they are beaten. One lesson hath been taught in vain, here's for another which methinks will find its way inside e'en their thick skulls. Let yonder cannon be run out, and tilted so as to command the path. Behind it let a dozen well-proved musketeers be posted with the weapons primed and ready. Thus when these hot-brained fools come toiling round the bend ye shall let fly and send a goodly number of them to their death. Then when the rest, dismayed, turn back and flee, we will all sally forth, pursue them to the shore and kill them there, ere one can reach the ship again. Hasten! They have paused, and doubtless now take breath before the final rush."

No time was lost in carrying out these orders; but half a minute may decide an action in such cases, and so it proved in this one. Just as the cannon had been rumbled to its place, its murderous muzzle pointed down the path, and the gunners were about to light their matches, the English captain, with his men close at his heels, swung round the bend and rushed upon them.

The fight was sharp and short; and within five minutes every Spaniard of the dozen who had sallied forth was lying dead. Then, as a murderous fire broke from the fort, the captain drew his men behind the shelter of some rocks and hailed the Spanish governor who stood alone upon the summit of a little tower.

"Hearken, sir," he cried, "and tell me if ye have inside your castle there a traitor of a Dutchman—one Jan Veem?"

"Know that I am Don Carlo Gomez," rejoined the other, loftily, "a servant of His Majesty the King of Spain, and as such traffic not in traitors."

"And know ye, too, my fine Don Carlo," cried the captain, "that I am Richard Strong, a servant of Elizabeth of England, and as such traffic not in liars. Yea, verily, I cast your words back in your teeth, and dare ye to swear that ye have not the traitorous dog I mention safe inside those walls, that ye were not in league with him, and that ye did not try to lure us to destruction by your thrice accursed light. Swear it, I say, if ye be not afraid of instant judgment!"

"Ah, Señor Strong, your speech is like your mode of warfare—rough and ready," mocked the Spaniard, with a bow. "Alas! I pray you to excuse me, for, by my sword, I am neither here to swear nor yet to parley with my country's foes. But hearken! Ye have fought gallantly and well, if blindly; such wanton bravery doth tickle me, and call aloud for recognition. Here, then, you have my word, as a gentleman of Spain, that ye are free to go back to your ship; which methinks will float off safely with the tide, and sail away, without a single act of ours to hinder you. What say ye?"

"What say I?" roared the captain. "Why this, thou black-haired, grinning son of Ananias: that lies breed lies, and that I trust not any word of yours beyond my nose; nor, if I did, would it incline me to consider such an insolent proposal. Here is my answer: Yield you that place and everything therein to me before I count out fifty, and be assured of mercy; refuse, and, by my life, I'll break in without leave and slaughter every mother's son of you! How now, my fine Don Carlo? Hast anything to answer ere I fall to counting?"

Doffing his cap, the Spaniard bowed and smiled in maddening fashion; then in clear, silvery tones, replied:—

"Methought you had lost blood enough a'ready; but now I crave your pardon for so rash a judgment. Truly I had forgotten that you English are as full of blood as butts are full of wine. Enter then, freely, and be certain of a hearty welcome. Meanwhile I will send forth a trusty iron messenger or two, to tell those in the ship the reason of your tarrying. See, gallant Señor Richard Strong, our gates are just below there—fine massive things. Locks, bolts, and bars are most entirely at your service. Open them with all speed, I pray you—that is, if you can!"

"No fear about the opening," replied the captain, cheerily, "considering the handsome key with which ye have provided us. So now, my gallant lord, Don Carlo Gomez, make ready to receive your English guests. Look you, my men!" he added, turning to those behind him and lowering his voice. "Ye see that fine brass cannon, ready loaded, with match and all complete; ye see, too, yonder mighty gates? Well, we will run that cannon close up to those doors and fire them such a salvo through the keyhole as methinks will serve to give us ready entrance! Then musket, pike, and sword shall do the rest. What say ye, friends?"

The answer was a shout so loud, and so like one of victory, that it made Don Carlo start in wonder. What could these English fools be up to now? Did they really think it possible to storm his stronghold? If so, they must indeed be clean demented. Let them attempt it, and their lumbering carcases would make an easy mark for ball and arrow! Pish to the red-faced, blundering fools!

Thus mused Don Carlo on the tower; yet notwithstanding all his fine bravado he sent swift messengers to see that every battlement and loophole had its musketeer or bowman ready. Then, with his cannon opening fire again upon the helpless vessel down below, he watched and waited, hand on beard, for what might follow; considering vaguely as he did so whether it were wise to deal with treachery and traitors, even for the sake of Spain!

Meanwhile the English captain gave his orders with a simple, swift precision which the dullest understanding could not fail to grasp.

"Hearken!" he said. "I want six men to volunteer to rush that gun into its place, and fire it. 'Tis a perilous adventure. Who goes with me? Hands up!"

Every hand was raised.

"Ah, I thought as much!" exclaimed the captain, proudly. "Therefore I choose these six who stand the nearest. Thus, when I say 'Now!' we seven shall seize yon cannon, swing it round, and run it to the gates. If any of us fall before we reach the spot ye will replace us. As soon as we have fired into the gates and made, I trust, a goodly breach, ye will all sweep out in line, well spread, and join us. Many will doubtless fall, for yonder silent walls methinks are thickly lined with shooters. But they who fall will do so in a right good cause, while they who win safe through will surely not go empty handed. For, look you, never yet was Spanish fort without rich treasure. I care not what their strength may be, for were they three to one we would o'ercome them. What say ye, friends, art ready?"

A deafening cheer bespoke alike their keen agreement and their impatience to be at it.

"Good!" quoth the captain, grimly. "Let your battle-cry be this: 'Jan Veem—the traitor!' And be sure ye take the dog alive, for I have planned a special duty for him. Now!"

The seven broke from the shelter of the rocks, and seized the cannon, turned it, and were flying on their way with it before the astonished Spaniards quite knew what had happened.

Don Carlo, on his tower, went white as swarthy skin would let him when he saw the meaning of the captain's "key." Losing his wonted calm he raised both hands above his head, and shouted wildly:—

"Shoot, fools, shoot!"

Musket and petronel spoke savagely, and arrows hissed; but so excited were the firers that only one man fell, while a yard shaft rattled harmlessly upon the captain's morion; and, ere the Spaniards could reload, the dare-devil little band had reached their goal and stopped with the cannon's muzzle scarce a good yard from the gates.

An interval of deep, dead silence followed, as though each side held back its breath in dread expectancy. A light was struck, the match flared, a crossbow bolt twanged from a loophole, and struck down him who held it; yet another snatched it from his hand, but even as he did so an arrow pierced his neck. The captain seized the burning fuse as the stricken fellow fell, and, bending, held it to the touch-hole. Then those behind the rocks (some seventy odd), unable to restrain themselves, broke forth and rushed with shouts of "Jan Veem, the traitor," across the open space between. A deadly fire of musket balls and arrows met them from the walls, and many fell, but not a man slacked pace.

And now the cannon spoke with deafening roar. There was a noise of rending timber, the mighty gates rocked groaningly; yet still, it seemed, stood firm. Had the thing failed them? No; for when the smoke had cleared a little a goodly breach rejoiced the hearts of those who crowded there behind their leader.

"Jan Veem, the traitor! Down with all Spaniards!" cried the captain, as with drawn sword he dashed on through the opening, followed by his men.

And now such fierce, deadly fighting broke out in that lonely fort as it had surely never known before, nor ever would again. Shouts,

shrieks, and groans resounded on all sides. Men fell by scores. The Spanish numbered over a hundred men, the stormers barely sixty; but such was the furious, all-conquering onslaught of the English, that in less than half an hour not a dozen of the Spaniards were alive, while of the attacking force some thirty men were dead.

Don Carlo was the last to fall. He had fought throughout with the fury of a tiger, killing many; but in the end he and the English leader, and not on mine," rejoined the captain, solemnly. "For, by my life, Don Carlo, one of us shall die!"

Without another word on either side, their swords crossed, and the fight began; while those who stood and watched, awaited the result with breathless eagerness.

The conflict was as keen as it was brief. Both men were wounded, the captain in his sword-arm, and the Spaniard in his left; and once it seemed as if this disadvantage to the

As the last heap of clothes was flung out, the captain sprang forward, and, diving to the bottom of the chest, dragged forth a limp, half-suffocated man.

who had so far failed to meet him, came face to face.

"Yield you as my prisoner!" cried the captain, lowering his sword; "and I will spare your life."

The Spaniard showed his teeth in one long, mocking smile; then, tightening his grip upon his sword, hissed:—

"Not for a thousand lives, you English dog! Fight on!"

"Then if ye fall, your blood be on your head, former, together with the latter's subtlety of fence, might spell disaster to the Englishman. But even as Don Carlo's point shot out with deadly, snake-like thrust towards the other's heart, the captain's mighty sword whirled down and sent him crashing to his death.

Ten Spaniards (all who had accepted quarter) huddled in a corner, gasped, and crossed themselves at this conclusion of a great defeat.

"So ends our fight, then!" murmured Captain Strong, as he wiped and sheathed his

sword. "Ye have done well indeed, my men, and proud am I of you; and by the look of yonder chests ye shall not lack reward. But first there is one other thing to do. Where is Jan Veem, the traitor?"

Ah, where, indeed? He whose name had formed the battle-cry had been forgotten. He, the prime cause of all this bloodshed, had not been seen. Indeed, no one had had time to think of him amid such deadly business. Thus, when the captain put his question, each man looked about him vacantly and shook his head.

"Ah, then we will make special search for him," said Captain Strong, "and if——" Here he broke off suddenly and gazed around with anxious eyes. "Harry, my son!" he said. "I see him not! Where is he?"

Again the men looked to and fro—this time in startled fashion. But Harry was not there.

"Heaven's mercy!" groaned the captain, turning pale and trembling, as no other danger could have made him do. Then, with an effort, he pulled himself together, and added, sharply: "You six will stay and guard our prisoners here. The rest will follow me in swift search for Jan Veem and my son."

Spreading among the building, they explored every nook and corner, high and low, calling the missing boy by name unceasingly. But neither of him nor of the traitor could they find a trace.

At last, when further search seemed hopeless, and Captain Strong, well-nigh beside himself, paced to and fro distracted and alone upon the very turret-tower from which the Spanish leader had defied him, he heard what sounded like a groan beneath his very feet. A case containing musket balls stood close beside him in the centre of the tower, and thence the groan appeared to come. He dragged the box aside. Beneath it lay an iron ring embedded in the lead. At this he wrenched with all his might and thereby raised a massive trap-door.

Throwing himself full length upon the roof, the captain peered into the darkness, and there, a good ten feet below, saw Harry stretched out on his back. Calling for help he sprang into the hole and knelt beside his son. The boy's face was deathly white, his eyes were closed, his doublet soaked with blood.

Ready help was now at hand. A ladder was procured, and Harry gently raised. Swiftly and tenderly his father bore him to the common-room, and laid him on a couch. His wound was ugly, but not dangerous—a stab close by the shoulder. He had fainted from the loss of blood. First they bound up his wound, then they gave him wine, and soon he looked about him in a dazed, inquiring manner.

"Where is Jan Veem?" he asked at last.

"Nay, mind not him, my son," replied the captain, gently. "Enough it is for me that thou art safe. Let Jan Veem go, I say."

"Aye, sir; but 'twas he who stabbed me," murmured Harry, fiercely. "I came upon him suddenly, and when he fled I chased him to a tower. There a trap-door lay open; I tried to capture him; but he was much too strong for me. He stabbed with his poignard, cast me into the hole; and closed the hatch upon me. I shouted till I swooned, and knew no more till now. I would, sir, you could catch Jan Veem!" he added, wistfully.

"Not more than I do, Harry," growled the captain, tugging at his beard. "But methinks 'tis hopeless; for every hole and corner hath been searched in vain. Either the rogue escaped amid the turmoil of the fight, or, being hunted like a fox, hath cast himself in frenzied terror from the battlements and perished. But, as I said before, I care not now that you are safe. Therefore, alive or dead, let the dog go. I trow we have more fragrant business to consider. A glorious victory hath been won. Now for the treasure!"

"Alack! I'd give my share of it to catch Jan Veem!" sighed Harry.

"Ho, ho!" laughed Captain Strong. "Now, by my life, if thou art not as hungry for revenge as I am! Yet must we try to satisfy ourselves with other things. Bring here the Spanish coffers, men, and let us see how Jan Veem, willy-nilly, hath enriched us."

With eagerness the men obeyed. Chest after chest, tight locked and iron banded, was brought into the room and made to yield its heaped-up store of gold and silver coins, among them many English ones—a fact which proved that the *Ajax* was not the first ship to be decoyed by treachery.

"Now, by my life, if these same Spaniards were not wrecking pirates, and naught else!" exclaimed the captain, when the last box had been forced open. "Yet hath Heaven brought them to a just account. Look you, my masters, we shall sail back to England rich as kings. Now let us hasten these boxes, together with our wounded and our prisoners, aboard; for, as I said, the ship already shows clear signs of floating. Stay, though, what have we here?"

Six men came staggering in beneath a great, deep chest, six feet or more in length, and set it down upon the floor.

"By your leave, captain," panted one of

them, "we found it in a darkened far-off off-chamber by itself."

"So, so!" rejoined the captain. "Well, by the size and weight of it, methinks ye have secured the greatest treasure of them all. But open it, that we may prove the matter."

"By your leave, sir, but it was open when we found it. That is to say, the lid was closed, not locked. We slid these bolts ourselves to keep the lid down when we carried it."

"But not before ye peeped inside, I'll warrant me, ye rascals!"

"Ay, truly, sir, we took a hasty glance."

"And what saw ye?"

"Why, there's the rub, sir. We saw clothes—clothes—and nothing else. That puzzled us no little; for the weight of it is more like lead. And so we slid these bolts, and brought it straightway here."

"Then draw ye now the bolts and open," said the captain. "Perchance it is Don Carlo's wardrobe, with his plate and treasures hidden cunningly beneath. Up with the lid, I say!"

The bolts were loosed with noisy haste, the massive lid thrown back, and there, sure enough, a tumbled heap of rich embroidered clothing came to view.

"Was ever such a shameful medley of fine garments?" cried the captain, bending over them. "Did ye thus tumble them?" he added, turning sharply on the bearers.

"Nay, by your leave, sir, it was thus we found them!" they replied

"Then do I swear that this Don Carlo was as careless of his wardrobe as I am of mine. But turn them out; I'll warrant me that better things are underneath."

The men obeyed with eagerness. Then, as the last heap was thrown out, the captain, who stood by, sprang forward with a low, fierce cry, and, diving to the bottom of the chest, dragged forth a limp, half-suffocated man.

"Jan Veem!" went up the startled shout.

"Yes, Jan Veem, indeed!" cried Captain Strong. "That vile, black hound, Jan Veem, the traitor! Behold him well—the headstone of our victory! Stand, if thou art man enough," he added, giving him a shake.

Jan Veem made shift to do so, though his knees smote one against the other, and his eyes went to and fro like those of some trapped animal.

"Search him!" said the captain, drawing back.

They did so. His outer pockets bulged with gold doubloons—the price of treachery; from an inner one they brought a crumpled, greasy piece of parchment. This the captain seized and scanned with eagerness.

"Ah!" said he at last. "Here is the proof of his amazing wickedness and treachery This is none other than a chart which shows this place to be Carpré, a Spanish fort; here, too, are clear instructions how to run a ship ashore beneath the rocks at night; while on the back of it are the names of other ships which this dog hath thus betrayed. Vile hound!" he added, turning fiercely on the trembling wretch. "Did I not save your life, befriend you, trust you, pay you well? And is this your payment for such kindness? What say ye?"

But traitors are not eloquent when caught, so Jan Veem was silent. His ferret eyes went to and fro again; but that was all. He could not speak.

"Ah, ye have naught to say," went on the captain, sternly. "Nor do I wonder at it. Such villainy as yours would make an angel dumb. Bring him to yonder tower where flies the flag of Spain," he added, turning to those about him, "and let the others follow us."

* * * * *

"Jan Veem," said Captain Strong, when all were gathered on the tower, "the sin of which ye have proved guilty is, methinks, the foulest injury that man can do to man—rank treachery. For such there is no earthly shriving. Swift punishment alone is possible. Haul down that flag, my men!"

The hated Spanish ensign, which in the breezeless air hung well-nigh motionless as though it owned defeat, came fluttering down; while those aboard the distant ship cheered loud at what they took to be a sign of victory.

"Now tear the flag in twain," went on the captain, "and with it bind him hand and foot. Then aloft with him on that same rope."

With death so close and certain, Jan Veem found sudden voice and life. Falling upon his knees, he raised two clawing hands, and, in a broken medley of English, Dutch, and Spanish, begged wildly for his life.

"Nay," said the captain, sternly, "mercy is beyond me in a case like yours. That and forgiveness ye must seek elsewhere. Arise, and do the one thing left to you—die like a man."

* * * * *

That evening saw the *Ajax* sail away; while clear against the glowing sky, above the distant and deserted Spanish fort, Jan Veem, the Dutchman, swung—a warning to all traitors!

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF CRICKET

By E. H. D. SEWELL

Third Article: HINTS ON FIELDING

How to stand at short-slip.

MUCH in the same way that people of all ages keep the largest and best cherry to the last, I decided to make *fielding* in all its branches the theme of the third of the three articles I was asked to write for THE CAPTAIN. Why folk do keep the finest cherry to be devoured last I do not pretend to know, but the habit is usually termed a principle, and it is with first principles we are now engaged. Had I followed my own inclination, I should have treated with fielding first, for it is far and away the best and most enjoyable part of the game in my opinion. For in fielding there is a certainty which is non-existent in batting and bowling. The keen batsman may not get an innings, the keen bowler may not be put on to bowl; but, so long as he is on the field, there is always employment for the keen fieldsman. It is mainly his own fault if he finds the game dull. Certain it is that no really keen cricketer ever finds fielding a dull employment.

Like the great bowler, the great fieldsman is born and not made. By dint of constant practice of the right kind a healthy youngster who has good eyesight and sensitive hands can improve his fielding powers considerably, but your really bad field is a really bad field always. No amount of practice will convert him into a safe fieldsman, and, even if it does, a safe fieldsman is far removed from being a great fieldsman. Still, by dint of sustained strenuous effort at practice, a bad field may improve enough to justify his promotion from the "rabbit," or useless, stage to that stage the members of which are neither good, bad, nor indifferent, but who now and again stagger cricket humanity by bringing off some miraculous catch—possibly with both eyes tightly shut!—or by hitting the wicket after two seasons of continual overthrows. In this branch of the game, therefore, the gospel of practice must be preached as widely as in the cases of batting and bowling. No youngster can practise too much—not even he who is "the best field we have ever seen at —— School."

There are two things essential to a sustained success in the field, and these are very quick, as distinct from merely very good, eyesight, and extreme sensitivity of touch in the fingers and palms of both hands. We have all read or heard statements regarding So-and-so being handicapped by his eyesight, the said player wearing glasses. The wearing of spectacles is not necessarily a handicap. Without those instruments the individual would be handicapped. With them, if he has been to an oculist worthy the name, the bespectacled cricketer is not more handicapped than you or I who are lucky enough not to be obliged to wear glasses. J. N. Crawford is a very fine field, E. L. Kidd is one of the best short-slips the game has seen for many years. Both wear glasses. In the ordinary way, therefore, the wearing of spectacles is only a handicap if those spectacles are bad ones; or it happens to be misty or damp, or very hot weather. In the former case the cure is obvious, in the latter frequent cleaning with a handkerchief is the only way out of the difficulty.

Given a boy with really sharp eyesight—those with blue eyes usually make the best fieldsmen, and rifle and game shots, though there are, naturally enough, exceptions to this—and a good pair of hands, any school coach ought to be able to supply the world of cricket at large with a clinking fine fieldsman when the time comes to say good-bye to the old school. Sensitivity of touch can be improved, if not actually cultivated, by—as in the cases of

bowlers and batsmen—"living with" a cricket ball. By incessant handling, and by flinging the ball hard from one hand to the other, the fingers and palms grow accustomed to grip, and to hold on to, the ball at the very first instant of impact of ball on palm or finger. The fingers learn by instinct to close on to the ball at the very earliest opportunity with no half-and-half grip. I have tried this for years, and write from experience. In my case, I have so drilled my fingers to grip the ball at first impact, that in cases of ground fielding, where a quick return to the wicket is the whole essence of the contract, my chief difficulty has always been to release the ball, after once fielding it, sufficiently to get it into the throwing position.

THE FIELDING GRIP AND THE THROWING GRIP

This has always troubled me more than the actual securing of the ball in flight, or the returning of it straight and hard. And it is during those precious moments while shifting the ball from the securing-grip to the throwing-grip that the batsman gets home. Get a ball and see for yourself, and you will soon discover that you cannot throw accurately from the same grip that you fielded the ball—unless, by pure chance, you have fielded the ball with your fingers only. We have all done this from time to time, and can recall unusual catches we have made practically with only one finger gripping the ball against the palm of the hand, so that it is quite possible here and there for a bit of ground-fielding to have been achieved by, to all intents and purposes, the same grip from which we are accustomed to throw.

Thus when, in most of the standard books on the game, the young idea is sedulously advised "to pick up and throw in with one and the same action," it is as well to remember that the authors are advising what is always an impossibility *unless* you chance to field the ball with your throwing-grip. This must always be more or less—rather more than less—a pure chance, because it is out of the question to train your hand to so fine an extent as to be even tolerably sure of grasping a scudding ball with a particular grip.

This is, at any rate, one of the reasons why: "Always use two hands" is such sound advice. When two hands grasp the ball there is, the instant after receipt of it, an instinctive placing of the ball into the throwing-grip by the non-throwing hand. Constant practice will make this habit a second nature until we think we do really detect in some cases of "run-out" a clear instance of picking up and throwing in with one and the same action. Here and there we have seen it in a run-out by Jessop or Hobbs when they have fielded the ball one-handed; but even in those cases the run-out depended upon the luck of the grip, for not even such wonders as they can fling a wicket down unless the ball was in their throwing-grip.

It should be obvious that the throwing-grip is quite different from the receiving or fielding grip, because the palms of the hands are not used when throwing, and are generally, if not always, used when fielding.

A most important thing in all fielding operations is

THE CONTROL OF THE FEET.

Since it is plain that a right-handed thrower throws best off his left foot—if, indeed, he can throw at all off his right—it should be clear that he must learn so to manage his feet as to be sure of not having his weight on his left foot at the instant his right arm is going back for the beginning of the action of throwing. Here only constant practice is of any avail. Get someone to stand near a stump thirty yards away, and fling the ball along the ground in various directions. Dash at it, gather with one hand, and throw at the stump. This is splendid drill, if done forty times a day every day for the first month of every season.

It is held by many good judges that the throw should be from below the level of the shoulder. Yet some of the best throwers, from short distances like cover and mid-off, throw straight from above the shoulder. Hobbs generally does, and he has never had a superior for quickness and accuracy of throw combined. Whichever way suits the individual best is the best way for him to throw. I have certainly seen more overthrows and more inaccurate returns from the below-the-shoulder method than from the other.

I suppose one must add that for all balls coming straight at you the heels must be kept together behind the hands, but even that time-honoured advice is often honoured more in the breach than the observance. In all cases of one-handed fielding attempts I make a point of trying to get one foot behind the hand across the line of flight of the ball, and have saved many a four in the effort. This is easier to do than to explain.

All returns must be full-pitch, or a genuine long-hop, at the wicket-keeper or bowler—*as seldom as possible at the wicket.* If you hit the wicket, well and good, but it is the wicket-

keeper or bowler's job to break the wicket, not the fieldsman's. In throwing full pitch throw at, or just above, your man's head, and as hard as you like. If you throw at his hands you will almost certainly throw a yorker or a half-volley, and that means runs to your opponents and a batsman still in play. Flung as hard as you can fling it, a cricket ball drops a lot in the course of a ten-yards' flight, and more than double in twenty yards what it does in ten. So that it is better to fling too high—within reason—than too low. The taker has a better chance of putting the wicket down from a ball above his shoulder than from one at his feet. If you aim truly at his head he will get the ball bails-high, and bless you for ever afterwards.

I counsel *always* a full pitch from cover or mid-off. Anybody fit to field there ought to be able to fling a cricket ball twenty yards full pitch. By attempting a long hop from that distance the fieldsman loses time and chances the ball bouncing truly. He loses time because he has, firstly, to sight the wicket-keeper, and, secondly, to sight the correct line on the ground between himself and the wicket-keeper on to which to fling the ball. By looking for that line he takes his eyes off the wicket-keeper. Further, an inch *off* the direct line at ten yards becomes quite a lot wide of the mark by the time the ball (assuming it has bounced truly) has reached the wicket. So that, if the thrower has to be an inch off the line let that inch be in the vicinity of the wicket-keeper, and not ten yards from him. I can see no single point in favour of the long-hop, from cover or mid-off, when compared with the full-toss.

From the deep field it is quite a different matter for more than one reason, chief among which is the difficulty of throwing a full pitch accurately in any case, and especially from any distance over about forty yards. When throwing from seventy yards it does the ball no harm to receive the extra impetus, or life, which it receives from contact with the turf, and at this distance the matter of an inch off the straight line does not tell so heavily as it does from close range. From the long-field a full pitch is preferable in muddy weather, as then the ball is given no chance of pitching on soft stuff and "never" reaching the wicket-keeper.

The wrong way to hold the hands for a skied ball. The hands should be held together, and the little fingers may be interlocked.

Success in catching depends so very much upon the fieldsman's eyesight and the sensitivity of touch in his fingers and palms that it is not easy to suggest any general rules for guidance. One thing is assured, and that is that nobody whose palms and fingers are not acutely sensitive will ever make much of a catcher—the thing is impossible.

The best way to practise catching is to begin with the short-range catches—always from the bat wherever possible—and work up to the deep-field ones. In this way many a damaged finger is avoided, as the hands grow used to receiving the ball, and to taking it with comfort before being asked to hold some "sky-scraper" when still cold and stiff. Directly a hand begins to show symptoms of bruising stop practising for the day.

Do not get into the habit of "giving" the hands too much to the ball in the case of high catches. The hands *must* "give" in the case of a hard drive to mid-off or mid-on, or a hard cut to point or short third-man—that is absolutely necessary; but drawing back from high balls is apt to be overdone, and the catch bungled in consequence. Of course, there must be a certain amount of "give," but the

attention should be riveted more upon the ball and upon gripping it than upon anything else.

For high catches, a good plan is to have the little finger of one hand (whichever is most convenient) resting on the little finger of the other. Both hands thus become something of a basket for the ball to drop into. If you have your hands quite separate there is a real probability of the impetus of the ball knocking one hand away from the other, and of the ball escaping through the gap thus made. The interlocking of the little fingers prevents this from happening.

It is not a bad plan just before attempting such a catch—say, when the ball is about ten yards away—to tap the palms of the hands together, or pass the fingers of one hand rapidly over the other. This act awakens the nerves, and thus the sensitiveness of the palms and fingers, and increases their prehensile power for the moment. It also enables each hand to locate—or "sense"—the other. This last a matter of the first importance.

A FEW SIMPLE TIPS

on fielding in general and I have done.

Think that every ball bowled will be hit, or snicked, to you. Doing this keeps you on the *qui vive*.

When fielding first or second slip watch the bowler until he has delivered the ball. Watch the ball for a few feet of its course in order to determine what kind of ball it is—*e.g.*, a yorker on the leg-side will not give you a catch, a good length just outside the off-stump very likely will. Having made up your mind, glance rapidly at the batsman and await results.

Slip fieldsmen should stand well out of each other's reach to allow for either to grab on either side of him free of all chance of collision.

Slip fieldsmen should stand one foot slightly in advance of the other, and about two feet apart; leaning forward from the waist; knees bent and slack enough to be able to spring; hands wide open, fingers separate.

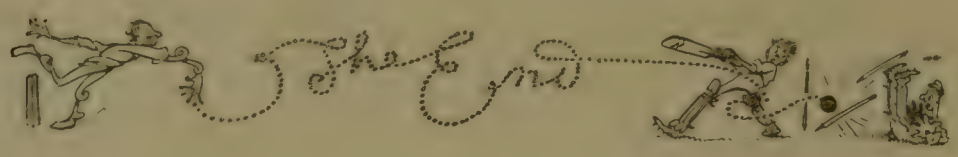
There should be absolute silence in the slips while the ball is in play.

Short third-man must glue his eyes on the bat once he has decided what manner of ball has been bowled. He should stand feet apart, leaning slightly forward, and be as ready not to flinch at the hard cut as to be quick on his feet for the "cocked-up" ball that only he can get to, and that only if he is quick.

All other fieldsmen, except point, should keep on their toes, *never still under any circumstances while the ball is in play*. It is easier to dash in or to either side when you are *on the move* than from a standing start.

The majority of deep fields *stand too deep*. The deep field who stands ten yards inside the boundary gets most of the catches. Think it out—the *really good* hit (few and far between) clears the boundary. The moderate hit out-numbers the good hit by about ten to one, and pitches a good ten yards inside the ring. Catches mean wickets, saving fours only keeps the score down. The mere fact of long-on standing ten yards inside the ring encourages batsmen to hit *who would otherwise not do so*. Such, then, proceed to pick the wrong ball, and therefore to mishit—result, a chance. It is not, after all, so difficult to run back to make a catch as is popularly supposed; and the running-back catch with the whole palm of the hand exposed to the ball is a *much* simpler catch than the running-in catch. I strongly advise budding Dentons, Hutchings, and Tyldesleys to stand too close than too deep—and all school captains to give this plan a really good trial before condemning it.

Finally, the first and last First Principle of Cricket is—*practice! practice!! practice!!!*



THE LAST POST

A Story of a Fateful Letter

By RICHARD BIRD ✦ Illustrated by Ernest Prater

"COME in!" said a voice that sounded deep and grim, in answer to the timorous knock of a boy aged nearly sixteen. Clapperton waited a moment in pardonable doubt as to the reception that awaited him. Then, summoning the dregs of his courage, he opened the door of the Head's study and entered.

The Old Man swung round in his desk chair as the door closed, and motioned Clapperton to a seat. He then took a sheet of paper on which were written notes. It was really Clapperton's *dossier*—jottings culled from various black books of various masters. Having studied it a moment the emblem of justice spoke. His tones were grave and even, not menacing. The record supplied its own threat.

As Clapperton entered the Old Man swung round in his chair. The boy's record—a bad record—lay on the table before him.

"You have been at the school two years, Clapperton," said the Old Man. "In your first term you were up for special detention seven times; in your second, six; third, eleven; fourth, ten; fifth, sixteen; sixth, twelve. In your first year, you were flogged by me twice; in your second, three times."

Clapperton listened modestly with downcast eyes. The record, he felt, called for no comment from him. Apparently the Old Man thought otherwise, for the silence grew so oppressive that Clapperton's eyes felt themselves drawn as by a magnet. He met the Old Man's gaze for a moment. With a reminiscence of the effect produced by the head of Medusa, he dropped them at once. He found strength to murmur, "Yes, sir." There was another awful pause, then the Head went on—just as evenly, just as inexorably as before.

"A very bad record, Clapperton. In justice to you I will say this, that your offences are generally for idleness or breaking bounds. I am glad to find you have never been punished for lying or 'cribbing.' Your character seems to be overflowing with misdirected energy rather than—than worse things. But this state of affairs cannot go on. To-day is the third day of a new term—a new school year. You have already been reported to me for breaking bounds. You deserve a flogging"—Clapperton

moved uneasily, as one remembering an ancient twinge of the gout. "But I shall not flog you." Clapperton felt the cushioned chair suddenly grateful once more. "This time I shall not punish you at all. In your case punishment seems to be useless. I have determined to leave it to your own common sense. You are quite old enough now to understand things. Please remember this: the next time you break bounds you will be expelled. I hope you will think it over seriously. Now you may go."

The victim of misdirected energy found himself outside the door in a kind of daze. "*Expelled!*" he muttered to himself as the full realisation of the term dawned upon him. "*Expelled!* Sacked, old man, *sacked!* That mustn't happen; it simply *mustn't* happen. I shall have to pull up. No more cheery excursions for me. Sacked would never do." He went on his way, wagging his head over the unsympathetic outlook of "the beaks." But he felt relieved at escaping the expected flogging, and his common sense was in no danger of letting the lust for liberty lead him astray. Clapperton resolved with intense earnestness to turn over a new leaf. He felt, in a way, as if youth were slipping from him—a doleful thought; but he realised that this was a thing that had to be, so it was no use crying over spilt milk. For the future—alack!—he must be good.

Clapperton returned to his study and wrote a letter. As he was finishing, his study chum, Postgate, entered whistling. To him Clapperton explained the entirely new and original attitude adopted towards him by the authorities. He asked for sympathy. Postgate obliged.

"These old beaks," he observed, breaking off in the middle of "The Wedding Glide," "simply have no ideas. They've forgotten what it is to be young. Well, it's no use grousing: you'll just have to pull up and go slow—eh?"

"That's about the size of it," agreed Clapperton, licking the envelope. "Beastly nuisance, but I can't run the risk of sacking. What are you going to do?"

"Going down town."

"Good. I'll come with you.

It was only as they reached the door that Postgate thought of asking Clapperton if he had got leave. At Dipcote boys were allowed to "go down town" between mid-day and dinner. They had to keep to certain streets, of course, and all except the Sixth had to have a scrap of paper signed by their form master and countersigned by their house master before going. It was a formality that presented no terrors to any except defaulters. Clapperton many a time and oft had risked going down town without leave. He had been caught several times and duly punished, but his escapes had been so many that the failures hardly counted. To-day he paused.

"Hang it—no!" he said. "I forgot to ask Jimmie." (This was Jameson, his form master and junior house master.) "Wonder if he's likely to be in to ask now?"

"No. I saw him going out himself just before I came in. No chance there. You'll have to leave it alone for to-day, my son."

"That's so," agreed Clapperton. "In the old days a little thing like that might have been allowed to slide. Now—N.G.—N. blooming G."

This ready acceptance of altered conditions moved Postgate considerably. He felt almost like shaking Clapperton's hand and saying, "Cheer up, old friend—you're going to get well very soon, I know—these doctors are all croakers." Instead, he shook his head in gloomy acquiescence; the pal of his youth must not be sacked.

"'Fraid so, old man. Well, I'll just have to go alone. Is there anything I can do for you down town?"

Clapperton produced the letter he had just written.

"You might post this for me."

"Why not put it in the house-box?" suggested Postgate. "I might forget."

"'Cos it's cleared at eleven, and I specially want this to go to-day. That's the only reason I had for going down town. You mustn't forget. Tie a knot in your hankie—keep your right hand in your left pocket—put your shoes on the wrong feet, or something. Anything you like, only *don't* forget."

"All right," said Postgate, "give it here. Good. Ta-ta, old man. See you later."

They parted, Postgate for his mile-and-a-half to Dipcote Town—Clapperton to the swimming bath. Postgate, letter in pocket, accomplished his tramp in little over twenty minutes, reaching the town at 12.25. Here he transacted sundry duties, tabulated below:—

(*a*) Measured for a new blazer.

(*b*) Bought a copy of "The Mystery of the Phantom Aeroplane." (Paper covers—slightly soiled—3½d. Suitable for desk use.)

(*c*) Discovered a new kind of bun at Duke's. Ate and disliked it. Found it necessary to have an ice to take the taste out.

(*d*) Capped three masters. ("What right had they to spy about Duke's? Probably wanted an ice and were ashamed to eat it before him.")

(*e*) Inspected the three streets within bounds.

(*f*) Watched the raising of a horse that had slipped down.

By this time it was 12.45, and dinner was at one. Postgate hurried back to Dipcote. As he neared the precincts he put his hand in his pocket and discovered the letter he had forgotten. "Blow!" said Postgate, and went in to dinner to meet the wrath of Clapperton.

Clapperton did not appear, nor did Mr. Jameson. It seemed that Jimmie had taken Clapperton for a "pi walk." These walks were well known, compounded of pleasure and discomfort. Jimmie was an old Dipcotian, aged twenty-nine, a Rugger blue, and "an awfully decent chap." His study was open at all hours to any fellow who liked to come. Cheerful books and unofficial conversation—occasionally tea as well—were provided. It was a haven of rest that was immensely popular. Jimmie liked boys and did all he could for them. Cases of criminality received his special attention. Particularly hard cases were usually treated by a "pi walk." This meant that Jimmie and the patient took grub and a Thermos flask on their backs, and went for a tramp over the hills. The walk was jolly—the grub A1. The conversation was of athletics and the Higher Life. No preaching—a few decent words slipped in. Like the memorable character in the *Snark*, Jimmie on occasion tried to rouse the desperado with "jam and judicious advice." The treatment was eminently successful. It was understood that Clapperton was being treated on the accepted lines.

This was a blow to Postgate. However, there was nothing to be done now. After dinner he gave the letter to a fag named Sands and said, "Shove that in the letter-box, young 'un." It was the third day, you remember, of a new school year. Sands was a new boy, aged thirteen, unversed in wiles. He had no notion where the house letter-box was, and asked one Briscoe—a mature fag of a sportive humour. "Letter-box?" said Briscoe. "Go up to the top landing. You'll see a sort of cupboard-thing on the right. It's the new patent, y'know. Pull out the flap and drop the letter down. See?"

Sands thanked him with awe and went upstairs. He found the "cupboard-thing," pulled open the flap as directed, and posted the letter. He did not know that this was a time-honoured "sell" at Dipcote. The patent letter-box was really not very unlike a real letter-box. In point of fact, it was a dust-shoot for the convenience of the housemaids.

Clapperton returned at 6.10, footsore, tired, but cheerful. (It had been a "half" that day.) He explained to Postgate that they had had a ripping lunch, a ripping walk, a ripping tea at a farm-house, and that Jimmie had been most awfully ripping. Beyond that he refused to commit himself. Then, with a burst of memory that surprised Postgate, he asked if the letter had been posted.

"Awfully sorry," said Postgate, "but I quite forgot. I had such a lot to do——"

"You ass!" said Clapperton, vehemently. "That was a most important letter. It *had* to go to-day. Give it me, and I'll see if I can get the boot-boy to post it to-night."

"I gave it to a kid to post," said Postgate; "awfully sorry, old man——"

"Probably he forgot, too, or ate it, or something," said Clapperton, bitterly. "What kid was it?"

At that moment Sands passed on his way to prep. in the Lower Study. Postgate recognised him and hailed. "Hi! did you post that letter?"

"Yes," said Sands, trembling. Was this the bully of the school?

"Sure?" asked Clapperton, with odd persistence. "When did you post it?"

"Just after lunch, please."

"Where?"

"In the house-box upstairs, please."

"You little *ass!*" said Clapperton. Then, remembering that this was a new kid, he checked his anger. "Oh, well, it's not your fault. Get along to prep."

"Awfully sorry, old man," said Postgate. "Hope it wasn't so beastly important——"

"It *was*," said Clapperton. "But it's no use whining. That letter's in the dust-bin now. I must write another in prep. and it's *got* to go somehow to-night. I'll bribe the boot-boy. I'll catch him before he leaves. He doesn't go back to Dipcote till seven."

He went along the passage on his quest. On the way he was stopped by Mr. Coppleston, the house master.

"Come into my study, Clapperton," was the unwelcome greeting. "I want to have a talk with you."

This was the third official interview within seven hours. First, the Old Man; then, Jimmie; now, Coppleston.

"Golly!" thought the dismal Clapperton; "I might be a popular actress or the only survivor. I shall be glad to get to bed." He followed Coppleston, gloomily, knowing that the usual "jaw" was imminent. In the study his fears were not only verified—they were improved upon. After a lengthy review of Clapperton's horrid career, Mr. Coppleston pronounced sentence.

"Your work has been even more unsatisfactory since you were promoted to a study," he said. "You do not seem to feel the duty of working as hard when a master's eye is off you as when it is on. I shall not—as yet—deprive you of your study. But you will do your preparation in the Lower Study with the juniors till further notice, and you will sit next the master in charge. Begin to-night. Go and get your books now."

During the recital and inquisition there had been several interruptions. Once, Mr. Coppleston had been called away to decide a question of dormitories with the matron. Twice there had been telephone calls. Twice, bearers of impositions had had to be received and examined. By the time Clapperton escaped it was ten minutes past seven. He stole two minutes to interview the cook on the question nearest his heart.

"Has the boot-boy gone yet?"

"Gorn a quarter of a nower," was the discouraging reply.

"Is anybody else going down to Dipcote to-night? I've got a letter that *must* go."

"Lor', no, Master Clapperton. Nobody's going out again."

Clapperton's brain worked swiftly in the crisis.

"Is Mr. Jameson going out?"

"Just gorn to a conserk, Master Clapperton. Never mind—your letter will go in the morning all right. I dare say she won't mind waiting for a post."

The cook giggled fatuously, reminiscent of a youth long past. Clapperton longed to fell her with something heavy—the fire-shovel leaped to his eye. But time was pressing. He fled for his books and repaired to the Lower Study. Coppleston was already there, sitting at the end of a long table. It was one of his nights for prep.

"Your place is here, Clapperton," said Mr. Coppleston, austerely, pointing to a vacant seat on his right hand. Clapperton, taking the seat of honour, crushed with despair, conscious of the smirking fags, limply sat down and opened his Virgil. Fate was clearly against him: everything was going wrong. Nobody was going down to Dipcote. The last post from the G.P.O. went out at eleven o'clock—the last possible chance of getting his letter in in time. The written letter lay in the dust-bin. He could not write another now, directly beneath Coppleston's eye. Oh, hang Postgate!

Mr. Coppleston corrected some proses during prep., occasionally glancing round to make sure that work was proceeding on orthodox lines. He paid especial attention to Clapperton, and was gratified to notice not a sign of laziness or mutiny from the disgraced outcast. All the time Clapperton's eyes were bent upon his book. Now and then a leaf was turned as if in earnest and progressive study. But, as a matter of fact, Clapperton had never spent a more idle night. Not a line of Virgil did he translate—not a single word did he look out in the dic. Occasionally, to keep up appearances, he turned a page or changed his book, but it was only to keep up appearances. His brain was scheming, scheming, scheming for a way out of his difficulties. One thing was certain: that letter—or a duplicate—*must* be posted at the G.P.O. before eleven. Prep. ended at nine. Five minutes were allowed for milk and biscuits. Then, prayers and bed. It was clearly impossible to write a duplicate letter before 9.25 at the earliest. He *might* contrive to pencil one between 9.25 and 9.45 (lights out) in the dormitory. Even then, how could he post it? There was one way—nay, possibly two ways. Both were unpromising, but they seemed the only chances. Desperate, Clapperton resolved to try. He had little hope of success, but at least he would leave no stone unturned.

When nine o'clock struck and Mr. Coppleston rose to go, Clapperton spoke to him.

"Please, sir, I wrote a letter that I particularly wanted to go to-night. Might I, just this once, be allowed to take it down to the Dipcote post-office?"

Mr. Coppleston stared in natural amazement.

"Of course not, Clapperton," he said. "It must wait for the morning's post."

"It's—it's rather important, sir. I—I know it's not——"

"It's not a matter of life and death, surely?" said the master, not unkindly. He had some human traits.

"N—no, sir; but——"

"Then it must wait till the morning," said Mr. Coppleston, and turned away.

After all, one need not blame him too harshly. Boys' letters are rarely so urgent as to require a night-trip down town. And Clapperton had anything but a spotless record to justify him in asking a favour. Clapperton, of course, was not inclined to make allowances. "Beast!" he growled to himself. He went to prayers because he had to, but it is to be feared his devotions that night were, to say the least, grumpy. Luckily, Coppleston only saw his back. That at any rate was orthodox; it gave no sign of the tumult raging within.

Prayers came to an end, and the house filed submissively upstairs to bed. Clapperton undressed hurriedly, hoping against hope that he might get the duplicate scribbled. He had an indelible pencil, paper, an envelope, and a stamp. He had just got into his pyjamas when Coppleston—that evil familiar—came in on his usual round of the dormitories. As a rule he spent but a few minutes in each. To-night, of course, he lingered. Anxious to show that he bore no malice—that he was quite willing to lend a helping hand—to help every lame dog (even a Clapperton dog) over a stile—he leaned against the mantelpiece and began to talk cricket. Clapperton being captain of the school third eleven, he was made the special object of the unwelcome attention.

"Think you're going to beat Ladbrook this term, Clapperton?"

"Don't know, sir. Hope so, sir."

"I think you will, if you can get the fellows to hang tight to catches. That was what lost us the match last year—eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who's going to keep wicket?"

"Don't know, sir, yet."

"Nares—or Pinhey, perhaps?"

"Don't know, sir."

"Nares is best on his day, I think; but Pinhey is generally safe. It's a difficult problem, Clapperton."

"Yes, sir."

"More difficult, even, than Latin prose, Clapperton."

"Yes, sir."

"Are all the crack Ladbrookists back?"

"Don't know, sir."

Conversation on such lines would seem a difficult matter, but Mr. Coppleston carried it off with an admirable ease—nay, almost with zest. Completely conscious of an atmosphere of disapproval, he laboured faithfully to show himself the sympathetic master who is not above cricket shop—who can take an interest in his boys—who can converse with ease and fluency on infantile topics. When Clapperton lapsed into a silence that was almost sullen, almost markedly impertinent, Mr. Coppleston

It was not the first occasion Clapperton had taken the risk, but if he were caught this time it meant expulsion.

generously launched out on reminiscences of his Oxford days, when he, too, played cricket with gigantic Blues. He became, in fact, so interested in himself that he failed to notice how fast time was slipping away. The chimes of the cathedral clock pulled him up. He glanced at his watch.

"Ten o'clock!" he said, with a most genial laugh. "A quarter of an hour after time! Well, well—I must set myself an imposition!"

He turned out the gas, chuckling audibly at the *bon mot*. Clapperton, in black despair beneath the sheets, anathematised him in a snarl that almost reached his ears. The door closed, and—the great resolution was taken.

"I say, you chaps," said Clapperton in a whisper, "I'm going down town. Will you stay awake to let me in?"

"Rather!" whispered a chorus of three. "What's the game?"

"No game. It's a bit of business I've got to do, and do quick. Don't make a row while I'm away."

They promised. Luckily—the first bit of luck that had occurred that night—Clapperton was head of the dorm. There were two school prefects and three house-prefects in Coppleston's house. Each was head of a dorm., and was responsible for order and decorum. But there were six dorms., and by seniority and age Clapperton was head of this, the smallest. Had he been in another dorm. he could hardly have hoped to make his exit or return unnoticed—unless he had gone before the prefect came up to bed and returned after he was sound asleep. As it was, all was in his favour. Only—*if* he was caught, it meant expulsion this time. Clapperton knew and remembered this, but determined to take his chance.

He dressed quietly and put on a pair of gym. shoes. Then he opened the window. Close to the window was a spout and much strong, ancient ivy. It was not the first time Clapperton had made use of this unofficial ladder, but he had never been caught down town at night. Grasping the spout with a firm grip he clambered quietly and nimbly down, helping himself by the ivy branches. In a couple of minutes he was standing safely on Mr. Coppleston's drive. Then on tip-toe he made his way round to the back of the house. He had thought it all out during prep. in case—and knew exactly what he had to do, where to go, what to seek, how to seek. At the back of the house he found his goal—the dust-bin!

Listening for a moment to make sure he was not observed, he could not repress a tremble at the varied and minute noises of the night—the sough of the trees—the twitter of a wakeful bird—the ghostly hooting of an owl in a distant spinney. As he listened the cathedral chimes struck the quarter.

"Three-quarters of an hour," he thought. "I mustn't waste time." Quietly but resolutely he lifted the lid of the dust-bin, and laid it on the ground. Then from his pocket he took one of his Christmas gifts—a small electric torch. He held it carefully inside the bin, anxious not to show more light than he could help, pressed the button, and looked inside. His heart bounded with relief, for there, by good hap, lay the letter that had cost him so much—that meant so much to him. Seizing the letter he extinguished the torch and lifted the lid. In his triumph at this long-looked-for success he was careless for the first time. The iron lid slipped from his fingers and clanged vigorously upon the bin. Transfixed with fright, Clapperton stood, praying that it had not been heard. He waited a few minutes to make sure. Nothing happened, however, and with a heart bumping with thankfulness he turned his face towards the town.

Clapperton climbed the fence that separated the house from the neighbouring pasture at 10.19. Mr. Jameson came up the drive, returning from his "conserk," at 10.19½. As he came he saw a dark figure silhouetted against the sky on the top of the rail, and paused. By the size he guessed it was a boy. With a sigh he recognised the necessity of reporting. He did not shout, knowing the figure would vanish. Instead, he waited to catch the criminal red-handed, if he was returning. When he saw it drop over the other side of the fence he let himself in with his latchkey and went to Coppleston's study. He found his chief busy with a book. Coppleston looked up.

"There's a wire for you, Jameson," he said. "I hope it's no bad news. Here it is."

Jameson opened the yellow envelope and read. He smiled.

"I'm asked to go to London to-morrow for an interview about that Rangoon job," he said. "Can you let me off?"

"Of course. I wish you luck. If you get it, it may mean you'll want a day or two extra to look round. I understood you to say they want their man at once?"

"Yes. The Head said he'd make no difficulty. He's been awfully kind——"

Jameson stood musing. This was a chance he had been waiting for. It might mean a great deal.

"No kinder than you deserve," said Coppleston, heartily. "I hope you'll get it, though we shall be sorry to lose you."

"Thank you." Jimmie stood thinking. Possibly this was his last night at Dipcote. Should he sully it by reporting a boy? Ruefully he realised it was merely his duty.

"I saw someone getting over the fence just now. Looked like a boy going to town. Shall I go round the dormitories and make sure?"

Coppleston's face darkened.

"No," he said. "You go to bed, Jameson. If you mean to catch that first train you'll have to be up early. I'll see to it. I've already been round the lower windows. They're all safely fastened."

So Jimmie went to bed—incidentally, as it proved, for his last night at Dipcote. For he had got the Rangoon job and sailed in a week. Coppleston went straight upstairs. He inspected all the dormitories in turn. Last of all he came to Clapperton's. After lighting the gas and making sure, he turned it out again, and sat down on the vacant bed to wait.

At twenty minutes past eleven Clapperton returned. He had made, he considered, a very successful trip. He had reached the G.P.O. without being "twug," dropped his letter in the box, ten minutes before the last post went, and had returned unscathed. With a light heart he climbed the spout and ivy, rejoiced to find the window open, but was mildly surprised that no friendly face peered out at his ascent. "Must have dropped asleep after all," he reflected. "Won't I pull their legs tomorrow morning!" Carefully he clambered in, closed the window, and stealthily tip-toed across to his corner. A board creaked as he drew near to his bed. Then a voice said:—

"Is that you, Clapperton?"

He realised that he had been beaten on the post.

"Yes, sir," he said, miserably.

A match was struck. Mr. Coppleston lit the gas again, and looked at the night prowler.

"You have been down-town?"

"Yes, sir."

"Go to bed now. I shall see the Head tomorrow morning."

"Yes, sir."

Clapperton went to bed, and slept soundly. He knew it was all up with him—that he need expect no mercy. He had been duly warned—warned that very day—and here he was, caught; caught after he had dared so much and succeeded! It was cruel ill-luck! He had had no luck at all. All the time he had been fighting against odds and nearly—so nearly—brought it off! Well—it was no good grousing—he must just stand the racket. So he went to sleep.

He saw the Head next day. Questioned, he could do nothing but admit his crime. Had he any excuse? No, sir. Had he nothing to say? Nothing, sir. Why had he gone? It was a letter, sir, he wanted to get off by that post. Couldn't he explain what the necessity was of catching that post? No, sir. On this crucial point Clapperton was curiously dumb. The Head could get nothing out of him. There seemed to be some mystery—was there anything disgraceful in the background? Clapperton would not enlighten him. A dull man would have suspected secret crimes. The Head was not dull, but he was puzzled. He wished Jameson had been there, for he knew Jimmie's powers; he might have been able to get some explanation from this usually frank, but now secretive, boy. He seemed to be shy, yet his record was not that of a shy nature. With infinite distaste the Head closed the interview.

"I am sorry, Clapperton, but I cannot go back on my words. Such a deliberate defiance of school rules, coming directly on top of a last and serious warning, cannot be disregarded. I shall write to your mother to-day, and ask her to remove you."

The Head sighed again as Clapperton left the room. "And his mother is a widow," he reflected, gloomily, as he took up the fatal pen. "What a miserable business it all is!"

* * * * *

Mrs. Clapperton came down to Dipcote the next afternoon. She was closeted with the Head for half an hour. When Clapperton was summoned to the oft-visited room he went with a sinking heart. It was the worst hour of his life. The Head he could face alone, but —— To his intense relief and amazement he found the Head, and—no one else. The Old Man did not tell him to sit down; he had no wish to prolong the scene.

"I am going to eat my words," he said, quietly. "You will not be expelled. I did not understand—you would not let me understand—how important it was that that letter should reach Market Leighton by the first post. Why did you not tell me that for eight years running you had never forgotten your mother's birthday?"

THE END

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

A Story of Mystery and Adventure in Tibet

By HERBERT STRANG

Illustrated by RENE BULL

Synopsis of Opening Instalments

THREE young tea-planters in Assam—Bob Jackson, Dick Forrester, and Alan Mackenzie—are camping one night after a tiger hunt, when from the jungle an Englishman staggers towards them in a delirious fever. From his rambling words and from information gained subsequently they learn that he is a Captain Redfern, who had set out to explore the buried cities in Chinese Turkestan with an archæologist named Beresford, and they gather that he has escaped from some great peril, leaving his companion a prisoner in unknown hands. A rough plan is the only guide they find to the whereabouts of Beresford, but they set out to rescue him, leaving Redfern, still unconscious, in the care of a neighbouring planter. As they start two Chinamen ask to accompany them as far as their ways lie together. The younger seems to be under some mysterious spell exercised by the other (a one-armed man named Wen Shih), for whom he acts as interpreter, and once, when alone with Forrester, he declares that he is a mandarin's son in the power of Wen Shih, and implores the Englishman to rescue him. Shortly after this both Chinamen suddenly disappear.

On the third night they come upon an encampment of natives, who live in constant dread of the power of some mysterious "Eye." Their terror spreads to the explorers' own native carriers, who refuse to go farther. Accompanied only by their cook and a sirdar, the three reach an immense waterfall, and follow a pathway leading to a rift in a steep precipice. They proceed along this passage, until suddenly a high iron shutter drops behind them, completely cutting them off. They go forward, only to find their way barred by another shutter, over which the two Chinamen presently appear, commanding them to give up their weapons. They refuse. Soon a feeling of oppression comes over them; the air seems full of a strange odour, and one by one they lose consciousness.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAW OF THE EYE

SOME two hours later Mackenzie awoke, heaving a great sigh.

"Hech! But I've a sore head the morn!" he murmured, rubbing his eyes drowsily as he looked around him. The sight of bare blank walls, instead of the walls of his bungalow decorated with coloured plates from the illustrated papers, caused him to sit up suddenly, and rub his eyes again. It was a minute or two before full consciousness and the recollection of recent incidents returned to him. Then he remembered that his last waking moments had been spent in the rift; but he had awakened in a stone-walled, stone-floored cell, cubical in shape, and ten feet in each dimension.

His comrades, still asleep, lay at full stretch on the floor on either side of him.

"Eh! Dick! Bob! Waken yourselves!" he called.

There was no response.

He got up, moved somewhat totteringly to Forrester, and prodded him in the ribs.

"Waken!" he called again. "Man, what's wrong with you?"

He gazed anxiously into his friend's face, as Forrester slowly opened his eyes. Turning

away, he hastened to Jackson, poked him, bawled in his ear, felt his pulse. Then, assured that he was not dead, as he had begun to fear, he raised him in his arms, and shook him vigorously.

"Haven't got the ball, you ass!" Jackson spluttered.

"This isn't Rugger, old man," said Forrester, with a light laugh, coming to his side. "Wake up, and see where the beggars have carried us."

Jackson recovered his wits more tardily than the others.

"His face is green," Forrester whispered, uneasily.

"So is yours," said Mackenzie.

"And yours, too, by Jove!" cried Forrester, after a good look at him. "What the mischief have they been doing to us?"

"I cannot say. I know that my head is sore."

"I've a headache, if that's what you mean," said Forrester,

"So have I—splitting," added Jackson, sitting up, but still resting his hands on the floor. "By jinks—the stone is warm!"

"It is that," said Mackenzie, feeling it. "They're wishful we shan't take a chill, by the look of it."

They gazed around their narrow chamber. Walls and floor appeared to be of solid rock. In the centre of one wall was a door of stout timber, without lock or handle. High in another was an opening, like the arrow slits in mediæval castles, through which a white light filtered.

"Get on my back, Dick, and peep out," said Mackenzie.

In a moment Forrester was mounted.

"I see nothing but a blank wall twenty feet away," he called down, "and not much of that. It looks like the wall of the rift. I tell you what: this room must be cut out of the rock this side. When you called it a castle, you spoke better than you knew, Mac."

"Ay, so it seems," Mackenzie replied, as Forrester sprang down. "But I'm fair flummoxed. The room's perfectly light; though yon slit isn't more than twelve inches by two. Where does the light come from? It's greenish, too, which accounts for our delicate complexions. And, look! You see that?"

He pointed to the faint shadow of a fourth human figure that passed across the wall opposite to the window. It flitted through their own shadows, and disappeared. A moment's glance assured them that it had not been cast from without; yet the wall appeared solid, in no degree transparent.

There was no furniture in the room. Silently they sat upon the floor, watching the wall nervously for a return of the mysterious, inexplicable shadow. But it did not reappear. The strange light, the stranger apparition, brought back upon them redoubled the uneasiness they had felt ever since they entered the rift, and especially after seeing the ghostly procession on the wall. At that moment they could have believed that they lay in the haunt of some necromancer, whose magic art might manifest itself in terrors never yet conceived.

"They must have hocussed us," murmured Forrester at length, his thoughts reverting to his last conscious moments in the rift.

"Ay; put us to sleep with some narcotic gas," said Mackenzie. "What will they do next?"

"What have they done with our men?" said Jackson.

"Separated the goats from the sheep," replied Mackenzie, sardonically. "They are evidently respecters of persons."

"And they've bagged our rifles and revolvers——"

Forrester's voice ceased. The door had swung open, and there entered two small black men, almost wholly naked, with the uncouth bodies, hideous features, and coarse woolly hair of the wild pigmy races. Each carried a large bowl, one containing water, the other a sticky mess resembling porridge, and three spoons. Through the open doorway, in a brighter greenish light, the prisoners descried a group of similar negroes, armed with short spears and knives, like the dwarfs of the procession. The two food-bearers laid down the bowls and went out silently, the door swung to, a bolt grated in its sockets, and the prisoners were again alone.

Forrester bent over the larger bowl, smelling its contents.

"D'you think it's poisoned?" he asked.

"No, no!" replied Mackenzie. "They wouldn't keep us alive to poison us out of hand. I'm for having a go. We've had nothing to eat since noon."

He spooned up a quantity of the stuff and tasted it.

"Sticky, but not bad. Would be the better for a pinch of salt. Hunger is the best condiment—dip your spoons."

By the time they had finished their meal and emptied both the bowls, the daylight had faded, and the window-slit was black. Yet the

greenish rays that pervaded the room were as strong as ever. They sat discussing the strange phenomenon. Mackenzie advanced the theory that the rock was phosphorescent, and Jackson claimed that he had disproved it when, after rubbing his hand on the warm floor, there was no emanation of light from his fingers. Presently, tired out, and lulled by the warm, close air, they fell asleep.

They were awakened by finding themselves gently shaken. The door had been silently opened, and two visitors were in the room. The prisoners recognised them at once. They were the two Chinamen with whom they had unforgettable links.

"Arise!" said the lad, in his hushed, faltering tone. "Arise! The August and Venerable commands you to his presence."

"The August and Venerable isn't this one-armed villain after all," whispered Forrester. "We must go with them; there's no help for it."

They noticed that the one-armed man had changed his dress. He wore a long, white, full-sleeved garment with a green girdle about his waist. He signed to them to precede him through the open doorway. On passing out into a vaulted corridor, which, like their room, seemed to have been hewn out of the solid rock, they found awaiting them an escort of a dozen little black men like those they had already seen, and similarly armed. They followed them through corridor after corridor, the floors of which sloped gradually upwards, then into a kind of antechamber, and finally into a huge rectangular hall. The greenish light had grown stronger and stronger as they proceeded, and the hall was brilliantly illuminated, though the illumination had no visible source. Like diffused daylight when the sun has gone down, it came apparently from no definite direction: it was everywhere.

At first the three white men took in no details of the scene before them. They were dazzled by the brightness, oppressed with a sense of mystery, an apprehension of they knew not what, the dead silence that prevailed. But when their first sensations had passed they gazed about them with a tingling curiosity. The walls, glowing with the all-pervading greenish light, were decorated with Chinese designs. The predominant feature of the scheme was a figure which at first sight might have been mistaken for the conventional Chinese dragon; but on closer examination it seemed to the spectators to resemble more nearly the reconstruction of some prehistoric sea monster, such as European zoologists have attempted on the basis of fossil discoveries. The figures were arranged in a regular order. Some were large, some small, but all were of the same type, and they were rendered more lifelike and at the same time more hideous by the fact that their eyes glowed with a green light much more intense than the light that filled the hall itself.

Silent though it was, the hall was not unpeopled. Drawn up in two crescent ranks stood, motionless as statues, perhaps two hundred Chinamen, young and old. The cheeks of all alike were clean shaven, but there were differences between the two ranks. The heads of those in the first were absolutely hairless; their scalps shone like balls of polished ivory. They were clad in long, sleeveless robes resembling ecclesiastical copes, white with an edging of gold, and a large blue monster like those on the walls ramping across the middle of the back. The men in the second row were mustachioed, and had a top-knot of hair; their principal garment was a full-sleeved tunic, white also, but without embroidery of any kind. It was among these that Wen Shih, the one-armed Chinaman, placed himself after leaving his young compatriot and the three Englishmen with their escort just inside the doorway.

The silent assembly faced a huge dais or throne at the farther end of the hall, rising six or eight feet from the floor. It was of Chinese shape; the material of which it was made shone like gold, and its surface was marked with images of the symbolic monster, sculptured in high relief.

The Englishmen noticed that immediately opposite the throne there was a gap in the ranks of the company, eight or ten paces wide. Beyond this gap—that is, nearer to the end of the hall at which they had entered—stood a low pedestal, like the pedestal of a statue. But there was no statue upon it, nor was the throne occupied; the eyes of the silent throng, indeed, appeared to be fixed on a doorway in the wall behind and above the throne. It was covered with a cream-coloured hanging of some rich material, ornamented with monsters embroidered in gold. From it to the rear of the throne a broad stairway led.

The hush of expectancy which brooded over the whole assembly seized upon the three strangers. Their fascinated eyes were drawn as if by some magnetic attraction to the curtained doorway. Not one of them was tempted to speak; they were possessed by awe the same in kind as that which holds the worshippers in some vast cathedral.

Presently they became aware of a trembling in the air immediately above the throne, like that which is sometimes seen above the funnel of a locomotive engine at rest. By degrees a screen of mist, delicate as muslin, formed itself in front of the throne, the outlines of which became blurred, and were finally blotted out altogether. There was a momentary rustle, like the breaking of surf upon a long shore; then the same deathly stillness. The Chinamen had bent forward simultaneously, with the precision of trained soldiers, until their brows touched the floor. Of all the men in the hall, only the three Englishmen at the end stood upright upon their feet.

They gazed in mute amazement, tensely awaiting the explanation of this extraordinary scene. Presently they caught the gleam of gold through the shimmering screen; the mist slowly dispersed, the outlines of the throne were once more clear and distinct, and they thrilled as with an electric shock when they beheld, seated motionless upon the throne, a remarkable figure.

It was the figure of an old, old man, low in stature, bent and frail, but indeed with a certain impressiveness and majesty. A long, ivory-hued cope, stiff with gold, and emblazoned with purple monsters, descended to his feet, concealing a frame which the three spectators divined to be spare and emaciated. His head was covered with a towering head-dress like a bishop's mitre, but loftier, fantastically shaped, and gleaming with gold and jewels.

But the eyes of the beholders were drawn away from his gorgeous trappings to his countenance. Ivory pale, lined and wizened with great age, it was rendered strangely impressive by the eyes, which beamed with the lustre and brilliance of youth. His glance passed over the prostrate forms of the assembly, and fastened for one brief moment on the three straight figures at the end of the hall. In a clear, bell-like voice, surprising in so old a man, he uttered one word. The men prostrate below him rose to their feet; there was a brief pause, then for the space of several minutes a sort of litany was chanted, the old man reciting a sentence, the others making response in monotone. There was no gesture, no movement save the motions of their lips.

When the litany came to an end, at a word from the old man, Wen Shih left his place in the second rank and approached the Englishmen. He made them understand by signs that they were to accompany him to the foot of the throne. Moving as under a spell, they passed through the gap, scarcely conscious of the eyes of the men around, and halted a few paces from the seated patriarch. Wen Shih returned to his place. All was silent as the grave.

The old man gazed fixedly at them, and his searching look, bright as an eagle's, yet cold and paralysing, filled them with a chill foreboding. His lips moved, and in spite of themselves they started in amazement as they heard the first words that fell.

"What brings you striplings here?"

The face was Chinese, beyond possibility of error; but the words were English, slowly spoken, with only faint traces of a foreign accent. The tone was authoritative, compelling—that of one who would not be gainsaid. Forrester, always the readiest of the three, felt instinctively that no prevarication would avail, that the best chance of coming safely through whatever ordeal was in store lay in perfect frankness. Steadying his voice, and looking up into the old man's face, he explained, so rapidly that his words, as it were, tumbled over one another, that he had come with his comrades for the purpose of liberating a fellow countryman whom they believed to be held captive in this region, and he begged that the prisoner might be surrendered, and that all might be suffered to depart in peace.

The old man's countenance was utterly expressionless. It gave as little sign as a mask of what was passing through his mind. Forrester having ended, somewhat breathlessly, the mellow voice spoke again.

"All are welcome to the Temple of the Eye. I repel none, I invite none. Those who come by their own choice, or are led hither by the hand of Fate, must abide by their choice, or by Fate's decree. The rest of their lives hereafter must they spend in the service of the temple, fulfilling such offices as they may be best fitted to undertake. That is the Law of the Eye."

His utterance was slow and deliberate, like that of a man searching for words at one time familiar, but now half forgotten. The cold, dispassionate tones struck a chill upon the listeners' hearts. They had in them the ring of finality; the old man might have been the very mouthpiece of Fate, pronouncing doom.

The three men felt the utter hopelessness of argument or protest. Their spirits, under the spell of that calm, silvery voice, died within them. When Wen Shih came again to them, to lead them back to their former station, they accompanied him with the tranced meekness of men drugged for the gallows.

The Old Man gazed fixedly at them, and his searching look, cold and paralysing, filled the three with a chill foreboding.

A few moments after they reached the end of the hall they were roused from their stupor by the appearance of a small black man, led between two bald white-clad Chinamen like those in the first rank. His limbs were quivering, his teeth chattered; his staring eyes regarded the awful Presence on the throne with the same helpless terror as a bird fascinated by the baleful eye of a snake. The Priests of the Eye lifted him on to the pedestal in a line with the gap, and fastened his collapsing form upright in a light framework which they slid up from the base. Then they placed themselves on either side and made three low obeisances to the venerable figure on the throne. The man on the left uttered a few sentences in Chinese and bowed again; his fellow followed with a word or two. It seemed to the Englishmen that they were giving testimony against the quivering figure on the pedestal above them. The second man ceased, and made his obeisance, then both took places quietly at the ends of the front row on either side of the gap.

The Englishmen expected that the criminal, if such he were, would be called on for his answer to the charges made against him. But the old man said never a word. Amid a breathless stillness he rose slowly and majestically to his feet. Was he about to pronounce judgment? The Englishmen wondered what the punishment was to be. Recollections of the horrors of Chinese torture made them quake; but there was no sign of instruments of torture, no movement in the silent ranks, except that they turned and faced the victim. Their garments rustled, then all was still as before.

The old man moved his head from side to side, the movements being so slight that they might have passed unnoticed by anyone observing him less closely than the three Englishmen. Presently all motion ceased. The silence seemed even deeper than before. Then, with startling suddenness, from a point in the old man's head-dress immediately above the centre of his brow, a swift beam of blinding green light flashed along the hall, over the gap, past the pedestal, and on to the wall. It was gone in a moment. A low sound like the indrawing of breath ran through the assembly. A flicker of emotion stirred even the stolid faces of the Chinamen; a look of horror distorted the more expressive features of the Negrito guards; and the Englishmen were suddenly aware that the pedestal was vacant. The limp, shrinking form had vanished, together with the framework that had supported it. Only a little dust hung in the air.

While the Englishmen were still in their amazement the ranks faced about again, and the two priests who had led the victim to the spot drew near to it with the solemn gait of acolytes. One carried a golden trowel, the other a small, gold-handled brush. Standing on either side of the pedestal, the one swept a quantity of dust on its surface into the trowel held by the other. The latter, holding the trowel at arm's length in front of him, bore it slowly towards the throne, and after a profound obeisance offered it to the old man, and withdrew. Lifting his skinny right arm the old man extended the trowel towards the assembled priests, moved it from side to side, lightly sprinkling the dust on the floor, and in his cold, clear voice spoke with impressive deliberateness a single sentence. Once more the assembly fell prostrate, the air above the throne quivered, and the mist gradually rose before it, blotting it and its motionless occupant from sight.

CHAPTER IX

THE MONSTER ON THE WALL

THE three friends scarcely noticed what followed on the disappearance of the old man. The priests filed out quietly, each rank by a separate door. Only Wen Shih remained. He came slowly to the end of the hall, threw a contemptuous glance on the young lad, his late companion, who had fallen swooning to the floor, and signed to the Englishmen to follow him. Accompanied by the Negrito guards they quitted the hall, and marched back through the vaulted corridors. They were not, however, taken to the room which they had lately left. Mackenzie was led off by himself to a somewhat smaller cell, and locked in there; Jackson and Forrester being left meanwhile under charge of the guards. They, in their turn, were separately incarcerated. None of them knew anything of the fate of Sher Jang and Hamid Gul.

The scene which they had just witnessed, the climax of the series of mysterious happenings of the past few hours, had completely overwhelmed them. They were incapable of resistance, of protest, even of thought—everything was subdued to a shuddering horror.

Mackenzie found himself in a chamber differing from that which all three had previously occupied in two respects: its size, and the ornamentation of one of its walls. At first he was hardly aware of this; but recovering his composure by and by in the quiet of his solitary cell, he noticed that the wall opposite the window

slit bore a representation of the strange monster which was depicted on the walls of the hall. But here again there was a difference. The hideous creature had, in addition to two eyes normally placed, a third in the centre of the forehead, in the same position as the spot on the old man's head-dress from which the annihilating ray had sped. The cell was dimly illuminated by the mysterious green light; but the monster's third eye glowed brilliantly, a lozenge of vivid green.

Here at last, Mackenzie thought, was the explanation, or rather the confirmation, of the villagers' vague statements about the Eye. It was a symbol of the power presiding over this mountain community. He remembered having noticed a lozenge-shaped ornament on the head-dress of the Old Man of the Mountain; it was from this ornament that the beam of light had appeared to shoot. But what was the origin of this mysterious light? What was the secret of its tremendous devastating force, which in a single moment had shattered the little black man into a few handfuls of dust?

Mackenzie shuddered as he recalled the scene. This wizened old man, who appeared in a mist and vanished into a mist, who was revered as a deity, who was judge and executioner in one—who was he? The sound of his clear, silvery voice rang still in Mackenzie's ears. He remembered the cold remorseless words of his speech. All who came to the Temple of the Eye were doomed to spend the rest of their lives in its service! What did that mean? What service was exacted of the hapless wretches enthralled to such a master?

He remembered, too, that the old man had wholly ignored Forrester's reference to the Englishman who, it was suggested, had fallen into his hands. Had the dust of Beresford's destroyed body been already scattered on the floor of this horrible temple, or had he, too, been preserved for a lifelong servitude? Was he perhaps at this moment lying in a cell, alone, crushed in spirit, asking himself the same unanswerable questions?

Agitated beyond endurance, Mackenzie got up and paced the floor. As he walked he found himself glancing more and more frequently, and each time for a longer period, at the monster's green eye. It exercised a basilisk attraction; by and by he was unable to withdraw his gaze from it. He tried to look elsewhere, to think of other things, but always his eyes wandered back to the one spot. It glowed upon him with a sort of hypnotic fascination, leering, as it seemed, mocking him, a mute unwinking witness of his despair. Unable to endure the torment, he turned his back upon it, threw himself on the floor, and buried his face in his folded arms. And then at last, worn out in body and mind, he fell into a sleep broken by frightful dreams.

When he awoke, his hand moved by force of habit to his pocket for his watch. It was gone. He felt in all his pockets. They had been emptied—nothing but his clothes was left to him. Looking at the window slit he saw sunlight streaming in—the greenish hue had almost disappeared. He rose, and with a strong effort of will forced himself to turn towards the wall on which the monster was painted. He almost shouted with relief when he discovered that the third eye, though still aglow, was much dimmer than it had been in the night. The sun had conquered; the eye's baleful attraction was gone.

Presently the Negrito guards brought him his breakfast of water and the same glutinous porridge as on the previous day. He spoke to them, first in English then in Hindustani, but they answered nothing; if they understood him, they gave no sign of it. An hour or two later they returned, accompanied by one of the shaven priests, and indicated that he was to follow them. To refuse would, he knew, be vain; but he shivered with dread lest he should be summoned to witness another scene like that of the night. He found, however, that his fears were not justified. His guards took him through miles, as it seemed, of narrow corridors hewn in the rock, always ascending, and brought him presently to an arch through which the sunlight poured. Passing out into the open air, he saw with surprise that he was at the foot of a steep stairway cut in the face of the rift. The steps, about a foot wide, led to the summit, perhaps a hundred feet above. A rope, carried down a kind of hand-rail, intervened between the passenger and the abyss yawning more than a thousand feet below.

The guards signified that he was at liberty to ascend the stairs, and left him. At first he shrank from attempting the climb; his experiences and his restless night ill-fitted him for any task that demanded steady nerves. But Mackenzie was a man of grit: freedom, the fresh air, the pure sunshine braced him; his curiosity was keen, and at length, steadfastly averting his eyes from the dizzy depth, and clinging firmly to the rope, he began to mount the stairway.

He gained the top, and an unexpected sight met his wondering eyes. Before him, and on

either side, stretched a broad plateau, rising in the far distance to the mountains of the snowy range, whose peaks, miles high, glistened dazzlingly in the sunlight. That which surprised him most of all was that the plateau was cultivated. It was divided into many rectangular fields, on which crops of all kinds were growing, and herds of cattle and pigs grazed. The fresh green of the vegetation was refreshing to his eyes after the greyness of the barren rock on which they had rested of late. He saw now why the community required supplies of wood from the outside. There were no timber trees. At his right hand lay an extensive orchard, but nowhere were to be seen trees that could be felled for fuel or building.

In three directions there were groups of huts, and people were moving about in the fields. They were evidently of many races: There were dwarfish Negritos like the temple guards, Chinese, Tibetans, Nagas, and other hillmen. There were women and children; but these seemed to be all Negritos or hill folk — no Chinese women were among them.

"It saves from the Eye, sahib," she said. "The little black man gave it to me."

Mackenzie remained for several minutes at the top of the rock stairway, scanning the whole prospect. He was quite alone, apparently free to move in any direction he pleased. No one took notice of him. When he moved a few paces towards the nearest group of huts he looked round, expecting to find that someone had been told off to watch him. The fact that such was not the case induced a sense of utter hopelessness. If he was not guarded the reason must be that escape was impossible; but he promised himself that, granted his liberty thus, he would not rest until he had thoroughly explored the plateau, and assured himself that there was not, in one direction or another, an outlet into the larger world.

The sight of Sher Jang approaching him, spade in hand, recalled him to the present, and he hurried to meet the *shikari*, whose usually expressionless countenance lighted up at sight of him.

"It is good to see that you are alive," he said. "What did they do with you?"

"They locked me up, sahib, in a warm room, and this morning brought me here. A shornpate put this spade into my hand, and bade me dig. I have lost caste; it were better to die! But he told me I am a slave, and shall remain a slave while life lasts."

"And Hamid Gul?"

"I know nothing of him, sahib. I have not seen him since we left the pit below. There are many of my countrymen here; they are all in bondage, and they quake and shiver when they speak of the Eye."

"I don't wonder," Mackenzie murmured. "What do they say of the Eye?"

"They speak of it as of some unknown horror, sahib. No one has seen it; they say that no man sees it and lives. They declare that the one-armed stranger had both his arms like you and me. One day he had two; the next, when he came up, he had but one. They tell also that men have gone from this place down into the depths yonder, and have never been seen again. It is Fate—who can stand against it?"

At this moment a Chinaman, dressed like those who had formed the second rank in the temple, came up to Mackenzie, held out a spade, and signed that he was to join a line of men who were digging in a neighbouring field. Mackenzie thrust his hands into his pockets, and turned his back upon the man. To his surprise there was no insistence, no attempt at compulsion; the priest, as he supposed him to be, went away without a word. And then he saw Forrester hurrying towards him from the end of the stairway.

"Where's Bob?" were Forrester's first words.

"I was going to ask you that," Mackenzie replied. "I haven't seen him."

"They locked me up alone," Forrester went on, "and I never passed a more awful night. That eye!"

"The monster's on the wall?"

"Yes. Had you one, too? I couldn't look away from it. Try as I might the frightful thing seemed to draw my eyes to it against my will. What unnameable devilry are they playing on us?"

"Making good!" Mackenzie replied, with a grim tightening of his mouth. "The Old Man of the Mountain said we were to stay here for the rest of our lives; he means to terrify us into knocking under. But I vow——'

"For any sake say nothing," Forrester implored, earnestly. "I feel as if the very air were spying on us. And who knows if we say anything against him he won't burn us to powder as he did that poor trembling wretch?"

"An easy death — better than lifelong slavery! All these folk you see about are slaves."

"But why have they let us come up here?"

"To prove we can't escape, no doubt. But I'll not——"

"Hush! Look at that fellow slinking by," Forrester cried in an urgent whisper.

It was one of the shaven priests walking towards the orchard.

"Let's follow him," said Mackenzie. "There's no check upon us; we are free men still."

Sher Jang had returned to his digging. The two friends set off pace for pace after the priest. He did not enter the orchard, which was in no way railed off, but, skirting its upper end, he drew near to a long, low building of stone, with open doorways a few feet apart. It reminded Mackenzie of the rank of connected cottages often seen near engineering works in his own country, except that it was characteristically Chinese in form and decoration. The priest entered one of the doorways and disappeared. As they passed they heard a dull, incessant hammering from within the building.

"Sounds like a smithy," said Forrester. "I wonder what goes on there?"

A little beyond the building rose a sort of pagoda, three storeys high, but not so truly pyramidal in shape as the memorials frequently seen in China. It was surrounded by a walled enclosure, the wall being too high for them to see over.

"It's not big enough to be the temple," Mackenzie remarked. "I guess it's the residence of the August and Venerable. We'll go on; maybe we'll see the temple later."

"I don't want to see it," Forrester said, with a shudder. "I never want to see it again!"

"Eh! but I do," Mackenzie returned. "I wish to know all I can about this place. The look of the outside can't do us any harm."

But no such building came in sight. The only thing that attracted their attention was a stream flowing from north to south across the plateau, between earthen embankments. They were thinking of following its course, wondering where it had its outlet, when a horn sounded stridently in the distance. At the signal, the priests emerged from their dwellings, and marched towards the stairway. Mackenzie and Forrester followed them out of curiosity. They descended the stairway one by one. Soon afterwards another file, the mustachioed priests, came up from the opposite direction. None of them so much as glanced at the two young men standing aside to watch them. When all had gone down, Sher Jang came up to his masters, and told them that the horn blast was the signal for the midday meal. If they wished to eat they must descend, for no food was given on the plateau to any but its permanent inhabitants.

"I'll not go down till I must," said Mackenzie, firmly. "To exchange this fresh air and sunshine for the close atmosphere below—no, I'll fast for the day, rather!"

The two remained foodless for the rest of the day. No one interfered with them. They rambled where they pleased. Every now and then they spoke to one or other of the Indians in the community, asking them how they had come to the place, and what their experiences had been. A few had stumbled upon the rift by accident; most had been entrapped, kidnapped, or inveigled by the priests. All were utterly broken in spirit and lived in hourly terror of the Eye, the mysterious and dreadful something of which rumour spoke, but which none had seen.

Among those whom the Englishmen addressed was an old Indian who told them that he had been captured with his little daughter several years before on the outskirts of his village. He was a *zamindar*, a man of substance and of some education. He invited the two men into his hut.

"Lilavanti!" he called, as they entered.

From behind a curtain that divided the apartment a tall, beautiful girl of sixteen or seventeen years came forth. She wore no veil. A white *dhoti* was wound about her body. Her raven black hair was bound with a fillet of pearls, and a string of pearls depended from her neck. She bowed deeply as her father introduced the visitors as English sahibs, placed cushions for them, and then seated herself modestly in a corner.

"I have no hope for myself; but I still dream that my daughter may even yet be released from bondage," said the *zamindar*, looking with pride at the girl. "We are not ill-treated, you perceive—we make no complaints on that score. So long as the slaves fulfil their appointed tasks they suffer nothing at the hands of the priests. But our life is overshadowed by a cloud of uncertainty as to what the future may bring forth."

"What is the meaning of it all?" Forrester asked.

"No man knows; but I will tell you, sahibs, some conclusions I have come to. The Negritos are a dwindling race. Fresh blood is required in order to maintain a sufficient population for the cultivation of the soil. Prisoners are brought here for that purpose, and for another which I know not. At irregular intervals men are taken down the steps yonder; we never see them again. The strange thing is that no Indians are thus removed, but only Chinese and Negritos. And there is another strange thing: the Chinese prisoners of humble rank are set to work on the fields, and are never taken underground; but at intervals—sometimes long, sometimes short—young men of noble birth and high education are brought here. At first they spend their days here above, as you are doing to-day, and descend at sunset; but a time comes sooner or later when they descend for the last time, and are no more seen. And from the first they are listless, dazed, scarcely sane. If they speak, it is as though they were the mouthpiece of others. Some of them have conversed with me in my own tongue, but I have never been able to learn from them any particulars of their past life, or of the nature of the place underground where they pass the nights. Always they speak with the utmost reverence of the priests, whom they profess to deem their kind friends."

"Like our young Chinaman," Forrester remarked to Mackenzie.

"Aye; he is the latest victim, it seems. Have you ever seen one of our countrymen here?" Mackenzie asked.

"One only. I shrink from telling you. He came up daily for eight or ten days, and I had many conversations with him. It is four days since I saw him; I shall never see him again."

"Do you know his name?"

"It was never mentioned. He was simply the Sahib to us."

"Beresford—there's hardly a doubt," Forrester said to his friend, "And is there no means of escape from this plateau?"

"None. If you think of attempting it you may spare your labour. I have traversed the plateau from corner to corner. Behind are the mountains; if you could climb them you would only die of cold and hunger. In the centre is a mighty river that pours over the edge of the precipice. To cross it is impossible. In the other direction the plateau ends in a sheer precipice thousands of feet deep. The rift you have seen. That is the only entrance and exit. How its floor is reached I know not; I was made insensible there below, and when I revived I was here."

"And has no one—absolutely no one—at any time escaped from the regions below and returned here?" Mackenzie asked.

The *zamindar* looked round apprehensively, as if he feared that the walls might hear him. When he spoke it was in little more than a whisper.

"You are an Englishman," he said. "One man escaped—one only—a Negrito; it was five days ago. He came to my hut one night for shelter. I knew him. When he left here a year before he was young, plump, and bright-eyed; when he returned he was like an old man. He was mad. I had learnt something of his language, but I understood little of what he said, so wild and broken were his words. It was clear that he had lived among unspeakable horrors."

"What became of him?" asked Forrester.

"When my daughter and I were absent in the fields the priests came and took him. He is gone; we shall never see him again, and I am in constant fear that I shall suffer for harbouring him. In his ravings he spoke of the Eye, and shook like a man in ague."

The two Englishmen looked at each other. The same thought had occurred to them both; this was the Negrito whom they had seen suffer the punishment of the Eye.

"Shall we tell him?" Forrester asked.

"No, no! Don't let us terrify the old chap," his friend answered. "His dread of the unknown is depressing enough as it is. If we told him about the Eye, every moment of his life would be an agony."

They were still conversing when a horn sounded thrice. The *zamindar* rose from his seat.

"That is the signal for returning below," he said. "The sun is setting. I hope that I may see you to-morrow, sahibs."

His visitors rose to leave the hut, and bowed to the young girl. The *zamindar* politely escorted them to the doorway. Forrester was a pace or two in the rear. He felt a touch on his arm, a small object was slipped into his hand, and the Indian girl whispered in Hindustani:—

"It saves from the Eye, sahib. The little black man gave it to me."

She stole away behind the curtain, and Forrester, after a momentary pause, put the gift into his pocket, and followed his friend into the open air.

"Shall we refuse to go down?" he said.

"We shall get no food if we do. Besides, we must find out what has become of Bob and Hamid. At present, my brain is in a whirl—everything is so bewildering—maybe light will dawn by and by."

At the head of the stairway, two priests were awaiting them. One signed to Mackenzie to descend, and followed him. When they were out of sight the other indicated that Forrester was to go down. Singly they passed through the silent corridor, and were locked in their cells, each alone.

CHAPTER X

THE UNDERWORLD

MEANWHILE, what of Jackson and Hamid Gul?

The former, more nervous and highly strung than either of his friends, had suffered still more poignantly the malignant influence of the monster's eye. Like them, he had been taken that morning to the foot of the stairway, but the sight of the dizzy ascent had proved too much for him. He could not bring himself to face it, and returned to his cell, where he had remained all day in miserable solitude, his meals being brought to him at intervals.

Hamid Gul, the first to fall into unconsciousness, was also the first to revive. He came to himself as he was being carried along the corridor to the cell allotted to him, and immediately began to plead for mercy on the ground that he was only a servant, only the humble cook. One of the priests who understood Hindustani had reasons of his own for testing the man's skill. Accordingly, Hamid, after a night of solitude, was conducted to the kitchen attached to the priestly buildings on the plateau, and ordered to prepare one of his most appetising dishes. The man was as quick-witted as he was timorous. Like many native servants, he cherished a dog-like devotion to his master, and instantly made up his mind to employ his utmost art, in the hope of ingratiating himself with his captors to the advantage of the whole party. He concocted one of Forrester's favourite dishes, under the eye of the priest, who, having made him eat a portion as a precaution against poison, carried the rest away. Returning presently, he said, "It is well!" and informed Hamid that he was to consider himself attached, at any rate temporarily, to the kitchen staff. Hamid was delighted with his success, and would have been wondrously elated if he could have foreseen the remarkable events that were to spring from his clever cooking.

Forrester had dreaded the approach of night, when he would again have to encounter the unwinking glare of the eye. As soon as he had finished the meal brought to him by the Negritos as before, and was locked in, he took from his pocket the small article given him by the Indian girl. It looked like a tightly folded sheet of paper, greyish in colour. It crackled slightly in his hand. Opening it, he found it to be a thin sheet of some unfamiliar substance, about eighteen inches square. The only material to which he could compare it was mica; but on holding it between his eyes and the window, through which came the reflected glow of the setting sun, he discovered that it was more transparent than mica, but less than glass. From the first he had felt little confidence in the statement of the Indian girl. If this strange substance was a defence against the Eye why had not the little Negrito kept it for himself? Now that its transparency was proved, he lost even the slight hope which the girl's words had inspired. If pervious to daylight, how could this flimsy sheet give any protection against the incalculable force that must emanate from the Eye?

When darkness fell, and the green glow from the eye of the monster on the wall

dominated the little apartment, Forrester, rather from curiosity than with any belief in the efficacy of the screen, held it before his eyes. To his amazement, it was absolutely effective. The glow diminished to a faint luminosity. All its searching brilliance, its compelling power, was gone. He moved the screen aside to make sure that the light was still there, that it was not eclipsed by some other agency. He was immediately undeceived, and again held the screen between his eyes and the monster. What appeared to him still more remarkable was that, protected as he now was from the light, he felt little of that terrible depression of spirits which had tortured him on the previous night.

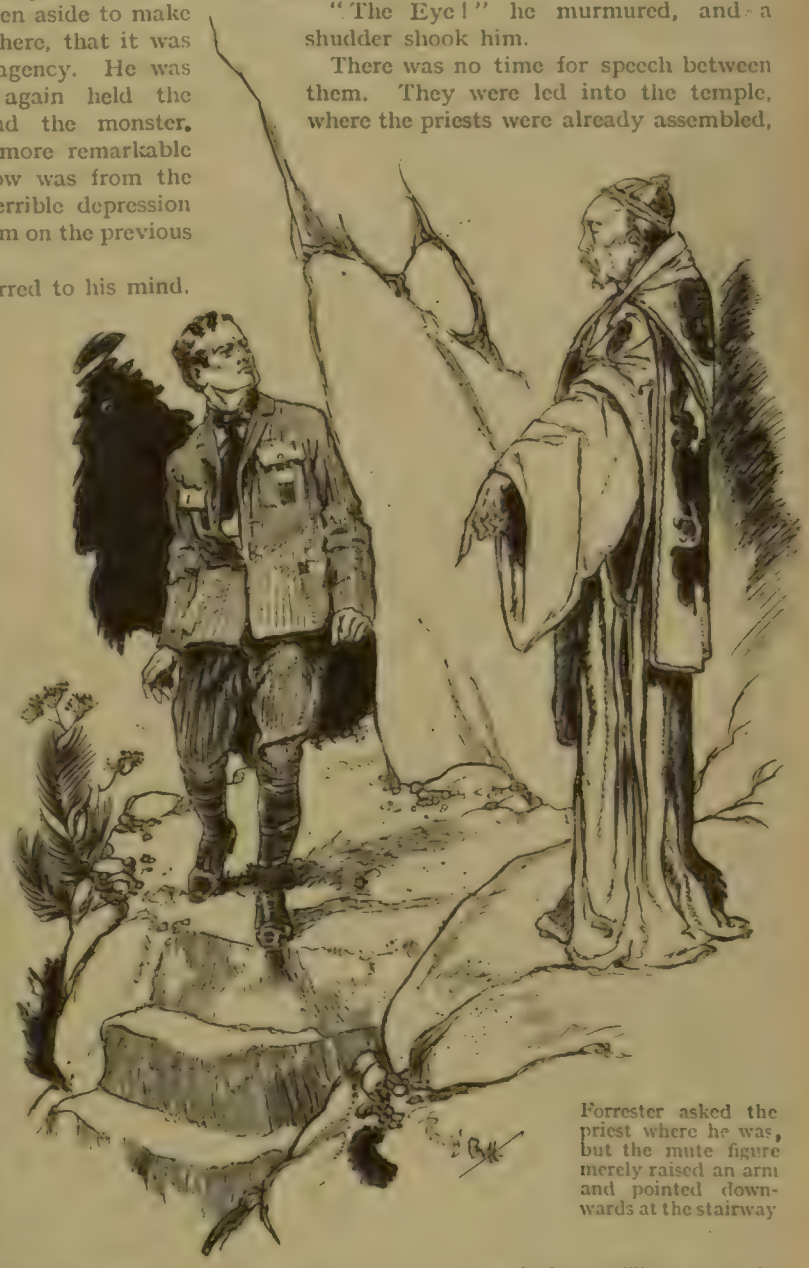
Mackenzie's suggestion recurred to his mind. The monster's eye was part of the fell machinery employed by the Old Man of the Mountain to crush the spirits of his victims. He relied upon its influence sooner or later to terrorise their minds into utter subjection to his own. From his one night's experience, Forrester felt that the desired effect would supervene soon rather than late; no mortal man could long withstand the mysterious force which the glaring eye exercised upon him. He instantly resolved to divide the screen next day into three portions, if that were practicable, and give one secretly to each of his comrades, supposing that Jackson appeared on the plateau. The fragments might avail to arrest the gradual breaking down of their will power.

Early next morning, before he could attempt to carry out his design, the door was opened, and the guards made signs that he was to follow them. Expecting to be led again to the stairway, he rose with alacrity. But his guides soon turned off into a passage branching from the corridor he had traversed on the previous day, and his heart sank with misgiving as he recognised presently the antechamber giving access to the temple.

He was detained there for a few minutes until joined by Mackenzie and Jackson. The aspect of the latter struck him with anxious foreboding. Jackson was deathly pale, his features were pinched, his eyes dull and ringed with dark shadows.

"The Eye!" he murmured, and a shudder shook him.

There was no time for speech between them. They were led into the temple, where the priests were already assembled,



Forrester asked the priest where he was, but the mute figure merely raised an arm and pointed downwards at the stairway

ranged in two rows as before. There was the same period of silent waiting, the same prostration on the floor when the mist ascended before the throne, the same gradual revelation of the August and Venerable. Again they chanted the

solemn litany, and during the performance the Englishmen grew faint with apprehension lest it were to be followed by a ghastly scene like that which they had formerly witnessed.

The last response was uttered, an ominous silence brooded over the place; then Mackenzie and Forrester saw with a shiver of horror, between two priests advancing, the shrinking form of Lilavanti. She was lifted on to the pedestal, and silently bound to the framework; then the shaven figure on her left made his genuflections, and began to declare her crime. The Englishmen, of course, understood not a word of his recital; they were indeed as though frozen stiff to the floor. But when the first accuser had come to an end, and his colleague had bowed thrice to the awful figure on the throne before taking up the tale, the girl turned her head slightly, and threw upon Forrester a glance in which he read a last anguished plea for help. A hot thrill surged through him, he felt his cheeks flush, and clenching his fists he sprang forward into the gap between the ranks of the priests, and strode swiftly up the floor towards the throne.

"Stop! Stop!" he cried, raising his hands aloft.

There was not a movement among the priests. So well disciplined were they, or so terrified at what might ensue upon any infraction of the customary order, that each man remained steadfast in his place. If any looked at the profane audacious stranger it must have been from the corners of his eyes.

At Forrester's impulsive movement, Mackenzie took a step or two forward, under the instinctive prompting to support his friend. But reflection brought him to a standstill. He could do nothing at present, the prudent part was to await the issue of Forrester's intervention; perhaps his aid would be more valuable later on.

Forrester had started almost at a run, looking straight at the immobile countenance of the Old Man on the throne. But the nearer he drew to it the slower he went. Under the steady gaze of those piercing eyes he felt his courage oozing away; he almost forgot his purpose. He struggled against the paralysis that seemed to be creeping over him; but when, standing immediately beneath, he tried to raise his arms, they fell limp to his sides. When he tried to utter the burning words of entreaty on his lips he could only mutter and mumble; and when the August and Venerable rose slowly in his place, and Forrester saw more clearly than before the lozenge-shaped ornament on his head-dress, from which the destructive beam had appeared to flash forth, he felt within his soul that he was about to share with the Indian girl the same annihilating doom.

A breathless stillness filled the temple. Then the Old Man spoke, and his words seemed to Forrester like drops of ice-cold water falling on his head.

"You offer yourself to judgment in place of the girl?"

Unknown to Forrester, such substitution was frequently practised in China. He scarcely understood the meaning of what he had heard. Commanding his voice with an effort, he whispered:—

"Spare her! Do her no harm!"

The blazing eyes pierced him through and through, but the Old Man's voice when he spoke again was cold and emotionless as ever. Mackenzie, at the end of the temple, wondered whether the wizened figure on the throne retained the least drop of warm blood in his veins, the least remnant of humanity.

"You oppose your puny strength to the Law of the Eye?"

"No, no!" Forrester whispered. "She is a young girl—have mercy upon her!"

"The Law of the Eye knows no mercy," the calm voice went on. "Whoso transgresses shall he not be cut off, even in the flower of his youth? In ignorance you have profaned this holy place; the Law ordains that the ignorant shall be chastised until he becomes wise. Its ordinance shall be fulfilled from generation to generation, even until the world dissolves. You shall be made wise, and when wisdom is yours you shall once more, and once only, behold the power of the Eye. You shall see that fair flower of maidenhood wither and become dust; then shall you yourself suffer the self-same penalty, and your dust shall mingle with hers."

Speechless, fascinated, Forrester stood as if transfixed, scarcely conscious that Lilavanti was reprieved. The quivering screen rose before his eyes, the figure of the Old Man seemed to flicker and dissolve into it. He was unaware of what went on behind him—that the girl had been released from the pedestal and taken out; that Mackenzie, his joy at his friend's respite swallowed up by dismay and dread of the future, was led away to his cell; that Jackson had been carried out in a swoon; that the priests had passed out in silent procession—all but one.

Presently he rose at the touch of a hand. Staggering to his feet, he saw that the vast chamber was empty, save for the priest at his

side. Unresisting, he allowed himself to be led through the hall into the antechamber, where the Negrito guards, trembling in every limb, were awaiting him. They filed out before him into the corridor, and he followed them, supposing that they were leading him back to his cell. Unheeding, he did not know that they passed his bolted door. Only when they stood back, and he saw in the dim green light a stairway descending in the rock before him, did he become aware that he was in a part strange to him. Turning round, he asked the priest where he was. The mute immobile figure merely raised an arm and pointed downwards at the stairway.

Forrester was incapable of resistance, protest, expostulation. He felt helpless as a child, compelled to obey the behest of a stronger will. Slowly he began to descend the stairs. The Negritos followed in a line, their spears slanted on their shoulders, and the priest in his wide flowing robes brought up the rear. Forrester, if he had been able to think, might have remembered that he had seen just such a procession passing like shades across the wall of the rift.

Down, always down they went, until after treading, perhaps, a hundred steps, they came to a long, smooth, stairless slope, steep enough to demand an effort lest the walking pace became an involuntary run. Presently there were more steps. At the foot of this second stairway the narrow, shallow tunnel—for it was no more—turned sharply to the left, and the floor again sloped, but this time upwards. Another series of stairs appeared. On ascending this, Forrester at length becoming awake to his surroundings, noticed that the greenish light was growing perceptibly brighter. He went on, up another incline, the floor of which was covered with a yielding deposit, apparently of dust that had fallen from the roof. Yet another flight of steps had to be mounted. Then the tunnel broke abruptly to the right, and a few paces more brought Forrester, more and more bewildered as he more completely recovered his wits, to the opening of a large cave on his left.

The light here was dimmer than at any other part of his progress. He glanced into the entrance, and was amazed to see a dark sheet of water, rippling a little in the dim greenish radiance, and extending beyond his eye-shot. The water washed the walls; but there was a narrow ledge of rock that lay uncovered, skirting the wall on the left. Forrester turned to inquire whether he was to proceed along this ledge, and discovered that the Negritos had halted some twenty paces in his rear, and blocked up the tunnel. Behind them the taller figure of the priest stood with arm outstretched towards the cave.

Taking this as a command to go on, Forrester wheeled round and walked towards the ledge, wondering with sickly apprehension what lay in the greenish mist beyond, and why his escort had not accompanied him. Glancing to the right as he reached the ledge, he saw in a recess commanding the entrance to the tunnel a group of armed Negritos, and a priest standing behind them. There could be no doubt that they were placed there as a guard—the recess was a sort of ward-room.

Proceeding along the ledge, he came in about twenty yards to a gap, bridged by a broad plank with a hand-rail on the side towards the lake. He crossed this, went along the continuation of the ledge on the farther side, and arrived suddenly at the entrance to another cave, larger and more lofty than the first, rising to a vaulted roof like the nave of a cathedral. Its floor of rock was a foot or two above the level of the lake. Entering it, he saw a number of human figures seated at the farther end. One of them rose on seeing a stranger, and, after a brief hesitation, stepped hastily forward to meet him. With a gulp and a half articulate cry Forrester quickened his step, and in a few moments was grasping a firm hand, and looking amazedly into an English face.

(To be continued.)

Open to Amateurs

— By —

AUGUSTUS MUIR

The Story of a Seven Miles Race Across Country

I

The door opened. A head was pushed round.

The piano did not stop.

The door opened wider. A clerical collar and black coat were pushed round.

The piano did not stop. It crashed louder. It resembled artillery.

"You're a slacker, James!" shouted he of the clerical garb. "Indoors—day like this!"

Jimmy's fingers fluttered like a sportive kitten amid the upper octaves, made a sudden dash amidships, and tripped as in a tango to the bottom of the keyboard. Then Jimmy's lithe hands dropped to his knees, and he sighed.

"I know, dad."

"You know," sputtered he of the clerical attire. His ruddy face grew redder. "You—you—you——" and he suddenly backed out of the room, slamming the door. The next moment the door shot open again.

"James, I have something to say. It is important. Listen."

Jimmy assumed a resigned air.

The rector cleared his throat. It was a massive throat. But indeed he was all massive, from the shiny bald spot to his limber instep—massive, clean-cut, and tough. You would have him in one thimbleful if you could only hear a certain retired octogenarian sexton stagger excitedly from the chimney corner, and (emitting endless hollow chuckles and tobacco juice) tell gaping visitors how, when the rector and he were attacked by three roughs one night crossing the common, the rector "fair bashed 'em, gents, bashed 'em!"

So that if Jimmy had been other than a son, he would have shrivelled on his music-stool. As it was, he deferentially studied his finger-nails.

The rector finished clearing his throat. "What are you doing indoors on such an afternoon?" he demanded, in staccato tones, pointing to the garden, where October sunlight pierced mellow trees and lit on green-gold turf.

"Practisin'," mumbled Jimmy.

"Practising! Pshaw, hunck, tch, tch, pshaw!" deprecated the rector. "Here you're moping in house slippers—you should be out of doors! You should be spanking 'cross country with hare and hounds! You should be sweating in the scrum! I'd almost say you'd be better nosing at hedge-roots for specimens than cooped up here. And for what? Practising! Pshaw, hunck, hunck!"

The rector stamped up and down the drawing-room. Jimmy meekly looked on. He knew from dire experience that his father's method of argument was neither suave, shuffling, nor honeyed. It was—with words as with fisticuffs—"bash 'em, gents, bash 'em!" Jimmy prepared to be mentally bashed.

He was.

The rector came to a standstill. "What have you done in your life?" he vociferated, erecting a brawny forefinger to punctuate his periods. "You have done nothing! I tell you when I was your age I had——" The rector's teeth clicked. (A row of pots, many won at school, gleamed in a cabinet behind him.) He dropped the parent pose and became the sportsman. "Here you are, Jimmy, sixteen or eighteen. You've done nothing at school, bar the junior hundred yards, years ago, and a music certif. which doesn't count. I've banged you off to business to gather sense, and what do you do every spare minute? You *practise*!" He dropped the sportsman and resumed the parent. "Pshaw, hunck,

tch, tch! Why aren't you out of doors on Saturday afternoon?"

"It's my only chance for my music, dad."

"But health's more important than Haydn," stamped the rector, fuming.

"Dad, I don't like the office," parried Jimmy.

"What's that—what's that?"

"Office is beastly, dad. Rotten. They actually go to football matches——"

"Where you should be, too," interjected the rector, heatedly.

"And I wish you'd send me to the 'Varsity, dad. I want fearfully a music degree."

"You what?" gasped the rector. "You—— 'Varsity!"

"Really, dad, I'd work like the dickens."

Then a new thought struck Jimmy.

"Listen, dad, I'd have a shot at my Blue."

"Eh?" cried the rector, jumping.

"My Blue, dad."

The rector took a large breath. A smile sparkled in his eye—which he hid. He suddenly longed to toe it in the dance, even though the whirl of his clerical tails should reap indignity. For the unheard of had happened—Jimmy wanted his Blue! This had been the rector's hidden desire; but Jimmy must get it off his own bat. He did not want to egg him to it. And now—— The rector crossed to the window, dug himself in the ribs with his thumb, winked covertly and joyously at the apple-tree, and turned and solemnly faced Jimmy. He planted his feet on the hearthrug. He spoke ponderously.

"Since, James, you have athletic leanings, it puts a rather different complexion on the question of University. And, James, I—aw—would be not altogether unwilling that——"

Then a spring inside the rector leapt its catch, he could contain himself no longer, the game was up, and he found himself jumping to seize Jimmy's hand and rattle out in the lingo of old days: "Jimmy, kid, you've been a slacker, and you'd have to work like a horse! It'll take you years, but, by George, if you got your Blue, kid, I—— Look here!"

The rector dashed from the room and reappeared with a newspaper. An excited forefinger swept down the columns. "There! Meeting of County Council. At Hayborne School sports, Council give a cup. 'Aid of county athletics'—fine! Seven miles, cross country, open. Look here, Jimmy, boy, win that race and I send you to the 'Varsity to get your Blue, your music degree, and everything else you want. Flick that cup from its divan, and I barge you up to Oxford as soon as you pass the matric! Do it, old man—show your mettle, Jimmy, kid!"

Jimmy had leapt from the music-stool.

"Truly, dad? You mean, if I win, you'll send me——"

"I do!" roared the rector, fetching Jimmy a tooth-rattler between the shoulder-blades, and striding jovially to his study.

Jimmy stood in the centre of the drawing-room, pondering. He looked at the music-stool, and he looked at the sunlight.

Then he put on his boots.

He had a huge appetite at tea-time.

II

Enthusiasm feeds upon itself. Inside two days Jimmy was a bundle of eager nerves. That there should be six months till the race made him chafe and flame with impatience. Six months! Jimmy felt he could do it next week!—choose your day and hour, by Jove! He felt he could frisk round those seven miles in thirty-five minutes. He felt he could chew up those seven miles like a Rolls-Royce—could nimbly skim them like a scamper round the garden. Antelopes did not feel fleeter.

And so after a nightly two-mile tramp, Jimmy pranced up and down his bedroom floor, and dreamed dreams. He began to feel sorry for Alfred Shrubb. His imagination glanced through the roof and hit the stars.

But one night Jimmy decided to have his first run. He would time himself—just, you understand, to see how he would compare with the record; he wasn't half sure he might reach it; he thought he might even—to be quite honest with himself—have a few seconds to spare. So he slipped on his new shoes, pants, vest, and jersey, opened the front door, and (the rectory being luckily in the suburbs) made a white streak through the gathering dusk of a country lane.

He had plotted out the distance on a road map, and knew he had to run to Hooker's Corner and back. Airily tripping along, Jimmy wondered what there was in seven miles for people to make all the fuss about.

It was, to be truthful, very few minutes later that the rector was startled from his sermon by hearing, first, the front-door thrown violently open; second, footsteps lurch across the hall, to plunge helplessly upstairs; and third, a brisk accompaniment of "Huh-huh-huh—oh!" which was gasped out in the manner of a drowning man, or a donkey-engine getting up steam.

The rector, startled, mounted the stair. Jimmy lay across his bed, with arms and legs hanging limp as a line of washing on a windless day. His head, crimson, drooped sideways. His tongue tended to dangle like a dog's. Steam oozed. His bosom heaved like the swell of Atlantic breakers, and all the time the "Huh-huh-huh—HUH!" smote the silence like the rasping note of a rip-saw.

The rector threw back his head and roared carolling laughter at the ceiling.

Jimmy feebly half raised himself. "Beast!" he gasped under his breath. "Oh, huh-huh-huh!"

The rector guffawed anew. He took Jimmy by a steaming ear and, pulling him to his feet, snapped a rough towel from a drawer, whipped off Jimmy's jersey, and started work.

"Chuck it, dad," groaned Jimmy. "You're peeling my skin. Oh!"

The rector did his best to granulate Jimmy's limp, supple back, and polished till he himself perspired. Then he pushed Jimmy under the bed-clothes, tucked him in, shook his head sadly, and returned, a doleful figure, to his study.

When Jimmy cooled down sufficiently to be capable of continuous thought, he bit the bed-clothes. He cowered beneath ignominy. He winced. That two short miles had pegged him out, and that dad witnessed this display of manly vigour, filled to the brim the biting cup of Jimmy's humiliation. Beneath the blankets, Jimmy drank this cup to the bitter lees, and rinsed it out with salt tears of shame.

But all at once he leapt from the bed. Every nerve was tense, every sinew braced. Jimmy looked himself between the eyes and registered a solemn vow. He swore that he would win that Hayborne seven miles. With clenched teeth, he dinned it into his brain. He would win it—or expire upon the track, when his limping soul before shooting amid the planets would take up the chase and flutter first to the taut white shining tape! Jimmy meant it with all his being. He would let dad see!

The next night found Jimmy making his first sensible move. He went to MacAlister. In the early 'eighties, MacAlister had been a pro. In the early 'nineties, MacAlister had been a coachman. MacAlister was now a retired gentleman, and he lived in a roadside cottage some two miles from Jimmy's domain. He was a little, quick, shrivelled man. He received Jimmy—as always—joyously.

"Come in, Master James, come in; take a seat; it's weeks since I've seen you!" MacAlister, as a coachman, had picked up sufficient Cockney to disguise his Scottish extraction. It was only in moments of extreme fervour that he lapsed to his natal Doric.

He lapsed to his natal Doric when he learned Jimmy's project.

"The Cooncil Cup! Maister Jeems—seven muckle miles, and twa of them plough, and three water jumps, and—michty, Maister Jeems, hae ye gone daft?" The old man's chin waggled at Jimmy.

Jimmy leaned forward and gripped MacAlister's tough old wrist. "MacAlister," he said, with quaking voice, "I'm goin' to do it, though I snuff out. I tell you, MacAlister, I mean to do it."

"But Maister Jeems—seven miles!" protested MacAlister. "D'ye ken what a long-distance race means? D'ye ken at the finish ye're running stane-blind? Ye dream swift, bluid-smoored dreams, with brass bands playing fearful music in them; and all the time there's the bang! bang! o' big guns firin' off inside your heid. It's a battery in your brain; it's an agony! Maister Jeems, tak' ma word, leave lang distances alane. A've had ma day o' them, and A ken. Here, Maister Jeems, hae a drap tea—that'll put sich fancies oot of your heid."

Jimmy sipped the tea, but held steadily to his purpose. Then MacAlister went into realism. He gave gruesome details; he made Jimmy's hair rise. Jimmy shivered, and said: "I guess I will snuff out, MacAlister; but I'm goin' through with it."

MacAlister whacked the floor with his tackety boot. "*That's* talkin' like man, now," he roared delightedly, in the heat of the moment unconsciously smearing his trousers with buttered toast. "Ye're a sport, Maister Jeems; a plucked 'un; and ye'll shauchle hame first, or ma name's no' MacAl'ster."

"You'll train me?" queried the joyous Jimmy.

"Train ye! Aye, man, and we'll run thae Broughton light-taes off their feet; we'll put the Eastford cracks to shame! It's Maister Jeems Fairey that'll snap that tape, as sure as parritch is parritch!"

"And when do we start trainin'?" said the business-like Jimmy.

"Finish your drap tea," demurred MacAlister; then, suddenly remembering himself, he added, in his best Cockney, "We'll stawt presently for a plice I want to show you, Mister Jimes. Say, I've a pair of sneakers in that there trunk, if you——"

"Got shoes at home," said Jimmy; "and by the way, MacAlister, do you mind if we keep this quiet? I don't want dad to know I'm training. After last night, he thinks I'm a weak slacker. I want it to be a surprise packet for him."

"Righto!" agreed MacAlister. "You'll 'ave your first run to-morrow night. And I know the best place in this 'ere country-side for trainin'. *Man, it's a g-r-r-rand place!* I mean to say, being 'alf-way between 'ere and the town, it's 'andy for both of us. Come on!"

And presently the two were plodding through the darkness. After a time, they left the turnpike, went down a narrow lane, which twisted endlessly, and reached the borders of a wood, where spread against the sky Jimmy saw the gaunt arms of a mill.

"I take a walk here every night," said MacAlister; "it's as solitary as a wilderness; and, in passing, I've often thought it's just the place for a man that wants peace to train." He approached, and pushing open a creaking door, lit a match. The place was musty and smelt of old wheat; but it was both warm and dry. MacAlister lit a candle, and Jimmy, looking at the roof where dim shadows leapt, saw that for years the mill must have been disused. The two stood silent. A gentle wind moved the great arms, for there was an occasional whisper in the machinery. A soft coo of doves came from aloft.

Jimmy saw at a glance it was the very place for him—thanks to MacAlister! He could slip across the fields, with strip in a handbag, and dress and undress here in perfect seclusion; there would be no more fiascos as per yesternight; and Jimmy's heart bounded as he thought of the race he was about to prepare for, and the plums in store should he succeed. MacAlister, who had been pottering at some old kegs, broke into Jimmy's reflections.

"To the first gate—two hundred yards," said MacAlister. "Off!"

"What time do ye get out from the office, Master James?"

"Five o'clock," said Jimmy.

"Then ye'll have time to be down here by half-past six? We'll no' stray far beyond that

lane for a week or twa—ye'll hae a queer stride at first, nae doot. Weel, weel, now ye've seen the place, we'll shut up for to-night and be gettin' awa hame."

"I say, MacAlister," stammered the excitedly happy Jimmy, "*th-thanks, awfully!*"

"Hoots!" said MacAlister.

III

Next night, punctual, Jimmy strode down the lane. In the little square window of the mill he saw a light, and as he approached, MacAlister came to the door, smoking a well-coloured clay, and nodded good evening.

"Feelin' fit?"

"Top-notch," grinned Jimmy, producing towel, shoes, and strip. MacAlister smoked a thoughtful pipe at the door while Jimmy changed. They went into the lane.

"The first gate," said MacAlister, pointing west, "will be two hundred yards. There and back!"

Jimmy shot off, and returned with heaving sides to seek repose against the mill door.

"Man, ye'll dae! But what makes ye keep your elbows clappit to your sides? Nae wonder ye're peched. Get into an easy swing, Maister Jeems; an easy swing. And nae mair of your high taes for me!" MacAlister demonstrated. "Now, off to that gate again, and let me see the easy swing and proper footfall."

"That's better," he approved, on Jimmy's return, as he plied the flesh gloves. "Now come and let me see ye jump. I was along in the mornin' and howkit a sand-pit. There's the trig. Loup ahead."

Jimmy louped. "Is this necessary?" he inquired during one of the rests. "Tak' ma word," nodded MacAlister, "there'll be three water jumps at least; and to clear them means ye keep dry skin and light feet. Which gains ye a score yards at the finish, Maister Jeems. Necessary!—get on with ye there, and a braw fourteen feet this time!"

Jimmy persevered and gained the old chap's approval. "That'll dae for the nicht, Maister Jeems. We're getting on. Grip that beam, and I'll rub ye down, see. Phew! ye're hot. But it's gr-r-rand for ye. It's thae flesh-gloves that bring the rosy blush. Dress now, while I sort something ben here." And MacAlister, scratching a match, disappeared into the next room.

Jimmy felt a glow of mental content. He knew he was no runner. But he was confident that if he persevered there was nothing to prevent him from becoming one. It was a bracing thought.

He was fastening his collar-stud, when the old chap appeared, bringing with him a strong blast of methylated spirit. In his hand was a steaming cup of bovril, which he held out to Jimmy.

"MacAlister," quavered Jimmy, "you—you're a—trump!"

"Hoots!" said MacAlister.

Jimmy progressed. He grew profoundly interested in the smallest details of training. He put his back into his work, and three times a week he jogged out to the mill and punctually went through the programme that MacAlister had planned. He was gradually initiated into the mysteries of the second wind; he was taught every trick of the trade, including the highest trick in running—pluck. And presently Jimmy began to be surprised at himself. He found he could finish a mile without a fierce longing to die at the end of it. It was an astonished Jimmy who found himself doing two miles and finishing with a clean fifteen-foot broad jump. And one night MacAlister produced a stop-watch, and Jimmy—Jimmy, the musical, the slacker—did his two miles in just under twelve minutes.

MacAlister slobbered over him with delight. "A kent ye had it in ye, Maister Jeems!"

One Saturday afternoon about Christmas, the pair went a walk to Broadacre. Broadacre is the Hayborne School playing-fields, where the sports are always held. It was just outside the suburbs, and a stretch of open country lay west. "Twa and a half miles radius," said MacAlister, making a sweep with his arm; "and if we are wise, we'll get acquainted with every gully, swamp, and stretch of plough." He produced a pocket-map. "They'll lead ye a bonny dance afore the seven miles are out; but if ye're prepared for it all, naething can put ye aboot. Here, for instance, is a chancy bit." He pointed to the map, which was scored at the place with horizontal lines and miniature rushes, and marked Blackford Swamp. "They may send ye up the bed of this burn, and bang through that swamp, Maister Jeems; then maybe a stretch of plough; and hame the last mile by high-road. So to-night we forsake the dainty lane, and contend wi' the forces of Nature. We'll start wi' plough."

That night they did start with "plough." Jimmy learnt for the first time the size of that word. It was pregnant with meaning. It teemed. Hitherto, a ploughed field had been

a beauteous thing, shot with gold and russet light at sunset, and in starlight tinged with sombre fires—a thing to brood over when you had eaten too much pie. But a night's jog changed all that. A ploughed field stood in all its blatant reality as a crude conglomeration, heaving and sodden, to navigate which was like plunging across a pan of sticky toffee. In places it was miniature mountaineering.

"Ye've taken long, man!" exclaimed MacAlister, as Jimmy's white-clad figure leapt into the candlelight.

"I lost a shoe," panted Jimmy. "Had to grovel for it in the furrows!"

"Hech! and how d'ye like plough?" asked MacAlister, grinning covertly, assiduous with the flesh-gloves.

"All in the day's work," said Jimmy, non-committal, dropping a smile into his hot bovril. After all, smiles are best seasoning.

"There's a tip or twa about swamp I could gie ye," nodded MacAlister, as they parted. "I ken a strip of swamp beyond the wood. Ye'll try it next week, Maister Jeems."

And so one clear moonlit night Jimmy had his first serious trial at a swamp. "It's the water-jumps that pech ye!" declared MacAlister. "Watch the slippery take-offs—or ye'll land with a skid in the mud!" And Jimmy, tingling with the breath of battle, strided out.

"This place is symbolical," he panted, afterwards, as he lay against a flour-keg. "Every second night I go regularly through the mill!"

"Thole it!" egged MacAlister.

IV

Thus, week by week, month by month, the training went on. Jimmy was careful to give no hint at home concerning his manner of spending the thrice-weekly two hours; and it was plain from the rector's demeanour that he deemed Jimmy the same dear slacker of old. For Jimmy, somehow, managed to put in as many hours per week at music as he had ever done. Thus his little plan of the surprise packet seemed likely to be successful. And days filed past.

Jimmy was feeling in tip-top condition, yet none too confident. He had, certainly, taken to plough like a schoolboy to butter-scotch, and under MacAlister's keen eye had acquired a knack with marshland that tremendously increased his pace. "Shall I knock off butcher meat?" said Jimmy, one day.

"Beef," bawled MacAlister; "believe me, Maister Jeems, beef and parritch have won mair races than ony high-chested trainers wi' their semolina and monkey-nuts." And as the race drew near, it was MacAlister who behind the scenes regulated every detail of Jimmy's daily régime. Yet, when Jimmy considered the cracks who would strip beside him on the twelfth of April, he was none too confident. But MacAlister was brighter.

MacAlister was brighter, and this fact was food and drink to Jimmy.

But with one fell swoop, his house of cards seemed to topple.

It happened this way. During the week before the race, he went about his office duties with the aspect of a clairvoyant. For instance, on Monday, Mr. Partlett, the manager, asked him to bring "Who's Who," and after sitting for ten minutes jerking with impatience, he was about to whack the bell when the door opened, and Jimmy, as if he were sleep-walking, inquired:—

"What was I to get, sir? Forgotten, sir."

On Tuesday, the manager overheard the cashier tell Jimmy, with more force than politeness, that he had rushed the company in for twenty-seven bob, by dispatching a telegram to the wrong address in New York. Nor was that all. On Friday, Jimmy was called into the manager's room to witness a client's signature. He concentrated his whole mind on signing his name properly—but somehow managed to splash his name across the deed in the wrong place.

"Here, here, here!" yelled the manager. "What's this, what's this?"

"Oh-h!" groaned the client.

"You're a fool, Fairey!" shouted the manager. "Yessir," said Jimmy, dolefully; "'fraid need new deed, sir."

It was after the client left that Jimmy learned, for the first time, the true extent of the manager's vocabulary.

Thus, the morrow came with Jimmy under a cloud of obloquy. His first thought on rising was: the race. He dressed with a queer feeling in the pit of his stomach, toyed nervously with some breakfast, and went out to the back to scrape his cross-country shoes. The next he heard was nine on the parlour clock; and as Jimmy scrambled in twenty minutes late a facetious youth remarked: "Trim your wings, my little Fairey, or Partlett will be plucking 'em. He eyes you venomously." Jimmy himself had forebodings. He trembled lest they should come true. They did come true. As

the rest of his fellows were preparing to doff their office jackets, the manager called him.

"See here, Fairey," he said, "I want you to understand you're making a mess of things all round. All round. Your letter-books are days behind. You were late this morning. Late, Fairey. All winter, I admit, there's been an improvement in your work, but now you lapse to your old ways. Your old ways, Fairey. It won't do. You'd better come back this afternoon and get your letter-books up to date. Up to date, d'you hear?"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy, numbly. He wavered back to his desk. It was one fell swoop, in all conscience!

A long time afterwards he found himself dazedly biting his penholder. He looked up at the clock. Twenty minutes had passed. The office was silent. Mr. Partlett, who was usually one of the last to leave on Saturday afternoons, had signed the final batch of letters and trundled off a quarter of an hour ago—the boom of the door had smashed Jimmy's last hope of him relenting. And so Jimmy sat on his stool and bit a penholder, and imagined the sports ground; the gay flags, the pretty frocks that dotted the field with bright pools of colour, the double, perhaps treble, line of runners, the sharp crack of the pistol, and the runners grimly stringing out across the landscape. Jimmy thought of it all, and panted.

Presently he roused himself from the state of dull, yearning coma, and his brain began to work. If he sat still, he lost his chance of the race and of 'Varsity. If he bolted, he was sure of sack from the office, but was not sure of winning. He remembered that he had seen Partlett at the sports last year—he had a young hopeful who high-jumped—and it was probable the kid was still at school.

"Of course," deliberated Jimmy, "even if Partlett did go, I don't think he'd spot me in my strip. But the point is that I'd be sacked for *bolting*, simply because an old fusty boss told me to stay."

Common sense said, "Sit still!" Adventure said, "Go!" Sport said, "I agree with Mr. Adventure." The Business Man beneath his waistcoat said, "Don't be a fool!"

It was Sport *v.* Business.

Jimmy wavered. Sport won.

V

The rector was finishing a leisurely lunch, when he heard the garden gate whanged open, and saw Jimmy dash up the path. Taking his place at the table, Jimmy briskly requested a chop.

"No potatoes, dad," remarked Jimmy, reaching for the bread. "Goin' to Hayborne Sports this afternoon?"

"Certainly," said the rector; "I always go. It is most important. Are you thinking of going, James?"

"Um-umph," said Jimmy, his mouth full of chop.

"I thought not," sighed the rector, folding his napkin. "Well, I'm off."

Jimmy knew that his race was timed for a bit after three o'clock, so that he was safe as regards time. With strip in a neat brown hand-bag, he boarded a 'bus. As the sports ground drew near, Jimmy thrilled with a strange high elation, and as the blare of the band reached him above the discordant jar of the 'bus, his pulses throbbed. He wanted desperately to exclaim to the man next him: "There is something glorious in school sports, isn't there? Can't you feel it?"

In the Old Boys' section of the pav. he stripped. The smell of embrocation and olive oil was exciting. Jimmy kept perpetually wondering which of the motley crowd were his fellow-competitors. Having ten minutes to spare, he slipped on his overcoat and took a stroll in the sunshine.

Two chaps, emerging from the refreshment tent, spotted Jimmy, and drew up.

"Brooks and Wardlaw," murmured Jimmy, making for them—they had been in his form, and were still at school. As Jimmy advanced, Brooks pulled out a sports programme and was vehemently pointing to it.

"I told this duffer, Wardlaw, it would be you," declared Brooks, after greetings had been exchanged. "He wouldn't believe it. As a matter of fact, I didn't altogether believe it myself. I say, old boy, are you really going to run these seven miles, or is it just a lark? You *are?* Then, by Jove, you've got some cheek! Look at these names there. These are beggars from Eastford and Broughton. Not one of our Hayborne chaps had the gas to enter."

"And our dear old Fairey sails up with a cheery smile!" chuckled Wardlaw. "Quite the thing. Abso. confident. 'To me, seven miles are as easy as Chopin,' hints he, with lordly air. However, I wish you luck, old man."

The news spread. Fellows in the Sixth smiled ironically. But small boys seized the news as the tit-bit of the moment. Fairey, the meditative musician, the late pianist-in-chief

at all school functions, had exchanged the music-stool for the running-track, and was about to compete with the county cracks! Nobody on earth is so hopeful as small boys; and every instant they could spare from discussion of Lower School events they gave to excited prophecies regarding Fairey and the seven miles.

Of this Jimmy was quite unconscious. It was MacAlister he wished to find. Without MacAlister he could do nothing. It was like asking him to face an operation without an anæsthetic. He would have given anything in the world to hear at his elbow, "Hoots, hoots, hoots, bristle up! Ye'll dae fine!" But the bell clanged over the heads of the crowd, and still there was no sign of MacAlister.

Nor was he at the starting-point. And, to Jimmy, hope slowly disappeared. He felt that he did not care which way the race went—of course, everyone feels that for half a second; it is merely a nervous state—but to Jimmy it was horribly real. The crowded faces at the ropes and grand-stand seemed antagonistic, and intensified his hopelessness. Jimmy listened to the starter's enthusiastic tones, as he explained the route. Jimmy thought the enthusiasm brutal—a torture designed specially for himself.

Then, "All ready?" All were ready. *Bang!* Jimmy found himself scudding round amid a clump of runners—the pace was furious. He glanced across the field at the gap in the crowd where the track led into the country, and, as he neared, a shrill cheer arose—"*Fai-rey!*" The small boys were backing him! Jimmy's fingers gripped his corks with a sudden resolve. "Fai-rey!—Fai-rey!" It cut the air enthusiastically. Oh, it was glorious to hear! It was the grandest thing that had happened to him! "Fai-rey!—Fai-rey!" In the midst of the pack, Jimmy turned in between the two stemmed back masses of shouting small boys, where the air was studded with joyful caps, and he took to the open country with a heart that was pounding perilously.

VI

The rector had taken up his stand at a quarter-past two. He eagerly fingered his programme, for every item interested him. He spent ten minutes chatting and comparing notes with the Head, who remarked to him:—

"I am glad to see James's name on our programme to-day."

"Nonsense!" deprecated the rector.

The Head whipped over a page and showed in black and white, "J. Fairey." After the rector was alone, his reason forced him to conclude it stood for someone else. Then he remembered his little talk with Jimmy on the subject of that race—but the fiasco a while after it drowned the sudden spurt of hope. There was plainly someone else of the name of Fairey.

Presently this conclusion was confirmed. The rector felt someone touch his arm. He wheeled round. There stood Mr. Partlett, with a light check suit and a sporty tie. The rector shook hands.

"How is James getting on?" he inquired, presently.

"Hum-m," deliberated Mr. Partlett. "Been doing well all winter, but this last week has grown dilatory and careless. Don't understand it. His work has fallen behind. In fact, he's at the office this afternoon to remedy his slackness and mistakes."

"At the office!" said the rector to himself. "There is certainly another Fairey, after all—What's that, Partlett?"

Partlett had emitted a booming noise through his moustache. He clutched the rector's arm and pointed. A bell was clanging within the ropes, and a straggling array of white figures were making for the starting-post.

"Look!" cried Partlett in a sepulchral voice, which ran the gamut, and ended in an epileptic squeak. He indicated the last of the stragglers.

The rector shook off the clutching hand of Partlett, and strained forward to get a better look. The last of the stragglers was Jimmy—that dear slacker, Jimmy! With a boot-heel the rector stamped his joy on the turf; he tipped his hat to the back of his head, and was about to smite Partlett on the shoulders, when he got a glimpse of Partlett's face. The rector started.

Partlett was fuming. A bristling noise came from his moustache. One could imagine his sporty tie stiffening out and standing on end.

"What's wrong?" queried the rector, who could not understand it. For himself, his heart was flying and glowing—larks were on the wing, and all the world tripped as to Pan's magic music. At that moment he could not conceive how anyone could be glum. "His liver, I suppose," he ruminated, and gave Partlett a playful dig.

Partlett fixed him with a glittering eye. "There's your boy, sir! Out there, I see him. I told him to remain at the office and sort his

mistakes. He has bolted, behind my back. He is deceiving me. He should be at his work. I'll have something serious to say on Monday. Bolt off, indeed! I may say, sir, this is a sample of what I've had to stand from him. Not good enough, not good enough!"

The rector startled the immediate vicinity by the heartiness, the devil-may-care, of the guffaw with which he greeted Partlett's speech.

Jimmy tried to sprint, but the effort was futile. Second man passed him and it seemed a lost race.

"You consider his conduct justified?" Partlett asked, coldly.

"His conduct justified! I tell you, this is the best thing Jimmy has done since he was aged eight, when he smashed a butcher boy aged twelve! I tell you, I saw it myself from my study window. It was this way——"

Mr. Partlett cut him short by turning on his heel. Then he swerved back and faced the rector. "I took your boy into my office," he rapped out like a telegraph receiver, "not to play the fool, but to work. Consider him dismissed, unless you see that he returns to his duties at once. At once!"

The rector said, "Poof!"

Now "Poof" can be spoken in a variety of tones, from that of a pussy cat to a maxim gun. The rector's "Poof" verged on the latter. It had punch. It crushed Partlett. Partlett dwindled into the depths of the crowd. And again the vicinity jumped in its boots and wished the big ruddy clergyman wouldn't laugh so.

The big ruddy clergyman dashed to the cleavage in the crowd where the track cut out to the open country; and he added his contrabasso to the shrill chorus of juniors as the seven-milers swept out from the oval, looking mighty fine.

His "Go it, Jimmy, kid!" was lost in the piping treble din of "Fai-rey! Fai-rey!"

Jimmy ran his own race.

He felt positive the leaders had done the first mile in 5.20, but their efforts to kill off the field had been unsuccessful. Only a few novices moaned to themselves. "Have we to keep this up for ever?" and slackened off. Jimmy held his position about the middle.

He went over the route in his mind, and cheered up immediately. He knew without being told that quite half a dozen of the men were better runners than he. All he had to rely on was luck, pluck, and familiarity with the

route. The last was certainly all on his side. There was, Jimmy knew, a stretch of steeply descending plough, which, above all things, is guaranteed to evoke the goddess Stitch. There was a sweep of marsh in the way. There was also a nasty hill to top. It was on the plough, swamp, and hill that the race would be won.

Jimmy found his second wind smoothly, for which he thanked his stars. During the second mile the pace was no training jog. On the first bit of plough Jimmy passed three men who seemed to hang together for mutual encouragement. Presently some were petering out and making for the high-road to get a lift home. The second stretch of plough found Jimmy beginning to feel uncomfortable—he was grateful that the field was narrow. But it gave place to something worse.

For the track swerved into Blackford Swamp. It was here Jimmy had determined to make his effort, whereas he fain would have lain down in the grass and rested. But he found himself gaining on two Broughton men, and this fired his drooping spirit. When he passed them they looked comparatively fresh; but they lacked the tricky MacAlister method of getting over soft ground. Jimmy offered fervent thanks to MacAlister. He seemed to see the old chap and every detail of the training, as clearly as the lines of the heavy bog he was traversing. The old eyes blinked gifts of hope. Jimmy tried to believe them real; and, as skilfully as he knew how, he splashed on.

He reached the first water-jump to find a man pulling his muddy limbs to the opposite bank. Jimmy leapt, landed neatly beside him, and passed on.

Now he was at the worst part of the course. Every few yards was a sodden mud pool. In spite of Jimmy's familiarity with bogs, this tested his powers to their utmost stretch. He reached the second water-jump, with knees that were none too firm. As far as memory took him, it was the worst jump he had to contend with. Picking his take-off, he let fly. A slippery bank received him. He slid, recovered, and felt a sudden sting in his side; but thankful he had escaped wading to the thighs in mud, Jimmy loped on. A clump of wood, and he knew he was half-way. Three and a half miles to go! Jimmy grew faint at the thought—and he knew he was only running fourth.

As he rounded the corner of the wood he saw he was on the heels of two men, who were within thirty yards of each other. He said, "I am going to pass them," and he did it. But their fresh look stuck in his mind like an obsession—he wondered sickly why everyone looked fresh but himself. And it cowed him. But the shrill young cheers that still re-echoed in his ears made him grit his teeth and fix dazed, dogged eyes on the figure ahead. Jimmy had counted the men as he passed. He was now running second. And presently the track wound away from the swamp, the little flags going along a lane; but though the firm ground was a temptation, Jimmy did not unduly force his pace. He remembered there was yet three-quarters of a mile of bog before the track turned into the high-road for home.

Jimmy's sensations began to grow desperate. A pain was shooting across his forehead, and his strained side was a dull ache. His sight was none too good, and the road trembled, as a picture behind hot, quivering air.

It was a battle between pluck and a fagged, weary body. Jimmy collected every ounce of his strength as he came to the last stretch of swamp. It seemed an hour before he reached first man, and, with a tearing effort, passed him and faced the last water jump.

Then the track turned, and there was the straight half-mile of road between him and home. With reeling head, Jimmy faced it.

It was not running; it was staggering, dragging himself, with sheer force of will. Sickening strains of music burdened his thoughts which he could not banish. And presently white specks wavered in the distance, and raced up, growing larger; he took them for schoolboys. Then the sickening music that crashed in his brain was quelled by shrill cheers. Figures were running alongside him now—a comfort; and his tired brain could have dreamed it was a training run, only nobody shouted and cheered at training runs; and you were not sick to death; nor did your legs sink numbly at every stride; you did not have to fight, fight to keep going. Sometimes the cheering was dulled by a fearful pulsing in his ears. Then it came clearer again, like voices in a mist: "Fai-rey! Fai-rey!" he heard it—sweet to hear! And again his head was throbbing, and his pained eyes saw figures flit beside him—could it be a training run after all?—but trees didn't sink and start at training runs, nor the road dwindle and waver so strangely. "*Fai-rey! Fai-rey!*" Yes, he must—must keep going.

VII

The rector did not return to his former position near the ropes, for he had suddenly lost interest in the school events. He stumped

up and down, pulling out his watch perpetually. He tried to recall his own time for seven miles, and failed. Whenever a motor-car would draw up at the gates he would hurry across and try to pick up information. And thirty—thirty-five—minutes passed, and the rector's excitement increased.

At the gates his attention was always drawn to a queer little man; the frayed coach-house garb and celluloid collar still preserved a reminiscence of decency; but it was the eager grey eyes that struck the rector. Motors were presently bringing up the runners who had dropped out, and on these the little man fixed like a limpet and extracted every scrap of news they possessed. The rector's ears were sharp enough to catch the Scottish accent. And two more minutes passed slowly. Another car throbbed up; and the rector saw the little man run forward and bombard it. He was about to approach himself, when the little man gave a shout, and shot off like a rocket through the crowd, in the direction of the track. The rector quickly concluded that the leaders must be approaching. And he elbowed back to the ropes.

The crowd was denser at the track; and the rector had difficulty in achieving a place. The band was quiet, everyone stood expectant, a hushed whisper ran through the field. Once a child called, and it sounded strangely clear. Heads craned towards the gap where the track entered. The rector's position was by the winning-post, and he got a clear view of the small opening, the spot that was the centre of interest.

A shrill far-away cheer was heard; a schoolboy cheer. Tension increased. The leader was surely nearing.

A shiver ran down the rector's spine. It was a thrilling moment. Suspense grew unbearable. The absence of music increased it, for it accentuated the sudden silence that fell on the whispering crowd. The shrill voices grew louder, nearer—as if round the corner. Then from the opening of the track there came a mighty burst of voices, which spread like a powder-fuse.

The rector strained to see. And then first man appeared; a little, thin figure that rocked and staggered; a little figure pale and mud-splashed. And the rector's hat shot into the air; his voice boomed above the cheers. Supreme moment! It was good to be a father!

The next moment breaths were suspended. The little figure, though still running, was staggering painfully. And second man, a great strong fellow, had turned into the oval.

"Jimmy—done!" said the rector in his throat. It looked true. Second man was gaining. A hundred yards to go, and the gap between them had lessened to ten strides.

With the sudden appearance of second man, the schoolboy chorus had been struck mute for an instant; but now it swelled out again—a challenge, a command, a plea, five hundred strong. It was glorious yet pitiful to see the thin, sinking figure gamely respond, and brace futile limbs to attempt the impossible.

Second man passed him.

It was a lost race. The school saw it, the rector saw it. Then all at once a small, quaint man shot out from the ropes, eluded a policeman, and flew in a frenzy to the grass within the track. He gesticulated wildly to the sinking runner, and screaming through the "Fai-rey, Fai-rey!" was an old, cracked voice, "Maister Jeems! Maister Jeems!"

The staggering figure looked up blindly, so that the sunlight sparkled in his eyes; and people near the ropes saw a new strength quench the pain that looked from them. He seemed to understand. His stride quickened.

The rector quivered, and leant over the ropes.

"Great kid!" he almost sobbed. "He's trying to sprint! Jimmy's gaining again! Great kid! Quick!"

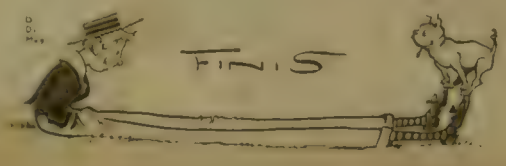
It was a poor, weak travesty of a sprint, but it sent the school wild. "*Fai-rey, Fai-rey!*" And he responded. He was gaining—gaining—gaining!

"Passed him!" screamed the rector. "Great kid, Jimmy! Ten yards more—on!"

And then a weak, limp figure toppled over the tape. The rector leapt the ropes. He dived for Jimmy, pushing off the quaint little man who slobbered over him on the grass, for all the world like a great retriever-dog.

"Which is it to be," shouted the rector, deliriously—"Oxford or Cambridge?"

But, of course, at the moment, Jimmy couldn't hear.



CHAMPIONS AT THE ZOO

Described and Illustrated by L. R. BRIGHTWELL, F.Z.S.

THE present year is being marked by a great International Athletic Congress, held, not in any stadium, but in the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park. Last year was marked in a similar manner, as indeed was each preceding year since the first opening of the gardens in 1828. But as each year some new athletic champion is added to the collection, one realises more and more that nowhere is specialisation carried to such extremes, or competition so fierce and ruthless, as in the wild.

Half an hour's visit even to the congress of 1914 will do much to convince the despondent sportsman that we are still a long way from realising the lurid visions depicted by some of our athletic writers. Nowhere in the world of men do we find that exaggeration of limb and body which confronts us on every hand in Regent's Park.

Scarcely a branch of athletics but has its exponents at the Zoo, though to the casual visitor their methods may not always appear to conform with the authorised regulations. Heats are run off at unearthly hours of the day and night; "training" and "diet" are mere words to most of the competitors, whilst the prizes, offered for the most part by the outside public, are usually secured by the strongest rather than by those competitors whose skill and efficiency rightly entitle them to the award.

Climbing the Pole.
Monkey, 1; Squirrel, 2; Bear, 3.

Allowing for the many differences in structure between ourselves and the lower animals, the human athlete may yet learn much from their methods. Take flat racing, for instance. Though all mammals run upon four feet, their method of starting is precisely the same as that employed by the most successful of modern athletes—the American attitude or "crouch"—the toes of the forefeet (in our case the knuckles) touching the starting-line, the body sloped well forward, and then at the crack of the pistol, a sudden kick off from the hindmost foot. Unlike the human sprinter, however, most animals do not, in the first few yards, rise higher on their legs, but keep the body as close to the ground as possible. In most cases, the furred or feathered sprinter sprints from one of two reasons—either in pursuit of its dinner, or in escape from some foe whose dinner it represents. When the hunting dog learnt to pursue the gazelle, the gazelle learnt to outstrip the hunting

dog, the natural consequence of which was to develop their hindquarters to a far greater pitch of muscular excellence than the fore limbs, though, in the majority of birds, and a few reptiles, we find this law reversed.

Such birds as were content to adopt running in place of flight have become awful examples of what over-specialisation may do for one. They stand for ever upon stilts. The ostrich, rhea, emu, cassowary, and kiwi might provide a very interesting hundred yards. Given the kiwi a twenty-yard start, and the ostrich scratch, it would be difficult to say off-hand which would be first

The Flat Race. 1.—"Here they come!" (Ostrich ahead.)

to "breast the tape." Slight as the apparent similarity between these birds and ourselves may be, the modern sprinter runs in exactly the same manner: head and body sloping well forward over the feet, and a swooping winglike motion of the arms. This is the method so eloquently advocated by "Reggie" Walker, a name familiar to all devotees of the cinder track. There is none of the amateur's head-well-back-and-up-and-elbows-hard-at-work about Mr. Walker—or the ostrich either. The frilled lizard holds the unique position of being the only living reptile which employs the human method of progression; and considering his eighteen inches, very creditable time he makes.

Hurdle jumping is not much in evidence at the Zoo; as a matter of fact, it receives very slight encouragement. It has too frequently taken the form of a flying leap over the fence or wire-netting, and a dash for liberty. The modern athlete has reduced the hurdle race to a sort of "sleight of toe" performance, "bucking" or trotting over the hurdles rather than actually jumping them. Greatly would some professionals be disconcerted if the prescribed distance of run and height of hurdle were suddenly to be altered, considering that they invariably practise the same regulation run and jump. It is just here that the animal has the "pull" over the man—it is trained by Nature from the first to expect the unexpected.

Nobody should miss seeing the high jump. The competition is tremendously keen in

the lion house, though some very promising candidates are recruited from the wolves' dens and the monkey and antelope houses. A famous Welsh terrier could, as the result of constant practice, clear the bar at eight feet; whilst twice that distance has been accomplished by the lynx when particularly "fit." The deer comes next, then the gemsbok, and the grasshopper in his early days—at maturity he blends legitimate jumping with aviation. As for the long-jumpers, the kangaroo, the jerboa, and the frog practically hold the field. A tree frog in the writer's possession, although no bigger than a penny, makes nothing of nine feet; landing on and adhering to a pane of glass like a mud pellet hurled from a catapult. The "old man boomer" clears ten feet at a stretch, whilst the tiny jerboa progresses in a series of seven-foot jumps made with such rapidity as to outstrip on occasion the fastest greyhound.

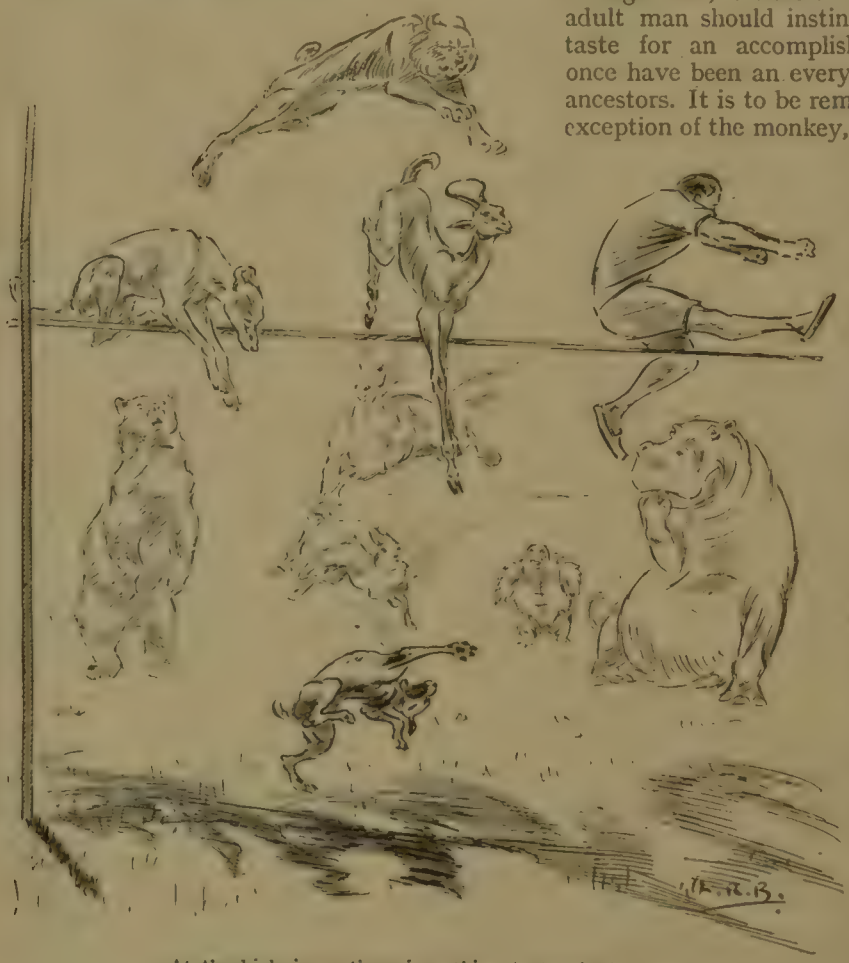
Perhaps the long jump shows as do few other sports the results of over-specialisation. The hind limbs have developed at the expense of the fore limbs, so much so that the arms and hands are only just of sufficient strength to convey food to the mouth. The jerboa, indeed, was believed by the ancients to possess no fore limbs whatever—and certainly they may be easily overlooked. Yet even stranger must have been the appearance of some prehistoric monsters, in which the hind limbs measured from ten to fifteen feet in length, whilst the forelimbs were no longer and far less perfectly developed than those of the average man. It is noteworthy that all these long-jumpers, excepting the frog, carry a balancing-pole in their enormous tails, to prevent them pitching forward on to their noses. The frog has to hold his hands before his face.

But if the modern athlete cannot, fortunately, show the development of limb we see in the lower animals, he has developed that which the dumb things largely lack: will power and resolution; and whereas all animals—and the unpractised amateur—lose speed and force in that one moment when they judge their distance, the practised jumper can make up his mind instantaneously, and without losing a moment in manœuvring for the jump, use the full force of his impetus to clear the bar.

Like hurdle racing, "throwing the hammer" and "putting the shot" are discouraged in Regent's Park. Indeed, the hammer has only been thrown once to our knowledge; when some workmen left their tools within reach of George, the big Chacma baboon. On that occasion George hurled the hammer with such force as to cost the

The Flat Race. 2.—"There they go!" (The frilled lizard at the tail.)

society a considerable sum for broken glass and splintered woodwork. On the same occasion, encouraged no doubt by his success with the hammer, George "put the shot," a heavy roll of iron wire considerably outweighing the regulation 16lbs., but taken with the authorised 7ft. 6in. run (the exact length of his bedroom). An attempt to indulge in the fine old Scottish sport of "tossing the caber"—in this case a plane—was happily frustrated by the timely appearance of his keeper.



At the high jump there is nothing to touch the lynx.

Since the greatly improved bolts and fastenings attached to the cages have come into vogue, it is doubtful whether the present congress will be marked by a cross-country run. The last "run" was provided by a skunk. Thanks to the abundant scent, he was cornered at the end of a three-hour chase—in which a considerable portion of the staff participated.

The number of entries for the pole-climbing competition this year is enormous. The monkey is, of course, assured of the laurels, the squirrel will—as always—be second, and the bear, considering his clumsy build, likely to make a very good third. Man alone climbs for sport; all the zoological steeplejacks climb for their dinner; and this is not strange since, if there be anything in heredity, adult man should instinctively retain some taste for an accomplishment which must once have been an everyday necessity to his ancestors. It is to be remarked that, with the exception of the monkey, all the pole climbers use climbing-irons, which implements reach their maximum development in the sloth, a person who spends his life upon the horizontal ladder. Though the bear, racoon, coati, cat, and even the cocoanut crab show a fairly uniform development of limb too much application to the trapeze has had a somewhat over-stretching effect upon the arms of our poor relations; but the bandiest ostler might be pardoned for deriding their neglected nether limbs.

It is interesting to note, by the way, that those truly human methods of attack, boxing and wrestling, are only practised with anything like science or success by the bear; an animal whose general proportions coincide very closely with our own. The ursine tree kangaroo knows something of jiu-jitsu; but the bear might be given a welcome at the National Sporting Club. Unlike many other branches of athletics, boxing and wrestling demand that *every* part of the

athlete's anatomy should be well developed, and hence it is we find the bear and the ursine tree kangaroo present a very uniform fitness in their, at first sight, somewhat clumsy persons.

Rifle-shooting and its old-time forerunner archery are, unfortunately, not likely to form part of the present exhibition. The denizens of the wild are not accustomed to calling upon inanimate objects to aid them in the art of war. Some of our poor relations, it is true, are fairly good shots with stones and cocoanuts, but most animals prefer to rely solely upon their claws, horns, or teeth to bring them through the fight "right side up'ards." Even the trained circus monkey scarcely knows one end of a gun from the other. The porcupine might, perhaps, provide something of an archery display, but on this point authorities disagree. The general opinion nowadays is that the porcupine cannot, as was once declared, shoot forth his spines like darts; but merely that, under the influence of some great excitement, an old, dry quill or two may, on the sudden and violent contraction of the skin, be jerked forth some few inches before falling to the earth.

But there certainly might be a "penny squirt" competition. The monkey and the elephant would give a capital performance, though the laurels would probably go to the archer fish, who, considering his diminutive size, can shoot insects resting upon the waterside herbage at a very fair range—

George, the baboon, is unrivalled at throwing the hammer.

with a stream of water ejected from his spout-shaped mouth.

But in the natatorial world, what dreams of over-specialisation do we find? The last of all the animals to learn to swim, and the only animal (with few exceptions) that cannot swim instinctively, man, has adopted the method practised by one of the most primitive of creatures, namely, the frog. The majority of land animals progress through the water by means of a kind of feverish "trudge," and generally through necessity rather than for pleasure. The longer an animal stays in the water through sheer enjoyment, the bigger and yards, clad in our oldest suit and a battered hat, would care to add to our get-up a pair of thick fur gloves!

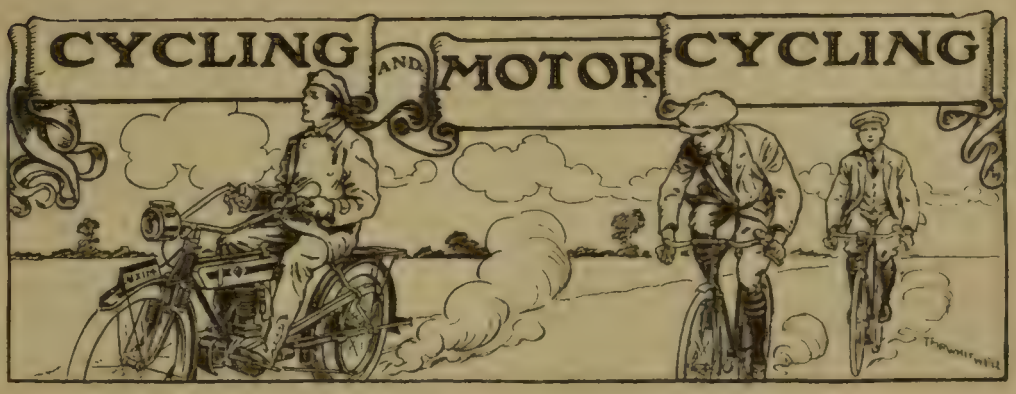
A sturdy figure on the cinder track and the pole (even the greasy-pole, whereon the goat is his only rival) the bear's athletic accomplishments only stop short at unaided flight. Here again we find some weird examples of specialisation. Even the most jaundiced imagination will scarcely entertain the belief that future generations of airmen will present anatomical features absent in their pedestrian brethren. It is scarcely probable, for instance, that aeroplane and aviator will become one,

Some competitors for the Zoo Swimming Championship. (The longer an animal stays in the water, the bigger grow its feet.)

webbier become its feet, as witness the otter, the seal, the coypu rat, the duck, and a host of other waterfowl—and the frog. Indeed, the feet of a certain toad from Central Africa, who never by any chance comes to land, present the appearance of miniature gig umbrellas.

Here again the broad-minded bear upholds his reputation as an all-round athlete, and should easily carry off the prize at a Serpentine "clothes race," for possibly not many of us who struggle forwards for fifty

which is the case with all animal aviators and parachutists. But the bear, fortunately, has no longings to develop wings. A creature of cosmopolitan but strictly terrestrial tastes, he needs a uniformly well developed physique to enjoy all that the earth has to offer him; which is mainly the reason why he threatens to become so keen a competitor for Dame Nature's all-round athletic championship—a trophy at present held, so most of us agree, by Homo Sapiens. Certainly he is the acknowledged Victor Ludorum of the Zoo.



By ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

Editor of "Engineering Wonders of the World." Author of "How it Works," etc.

TYRES CREEPING

AFTER replacing and inflating an inner tube, always screw down the collar on the stem *hard* against the rim. The metal plate at the foot of the stem should then press the edges of the cover against the inside of the rim with sufficient fo ce to prevent any circumferential movement. In the case of a motor-cycle, "hand tight" is not good enough; use a pair of pliers with the faces hollowed out to grip the collar. The bolt valve which is now much used on motor-cars may be adopted advantageously on motor-cycles also. The stem is made extra strong to stand the strain of the butterfly nut which replaces the ordinary round collar and gives the fingers a much greater leverage. Tyre creeping, if it does not actually tear the tube from the valve, may stretch the tube badly and make it difficult to replace, and is therefore to be avoided if possible. Under-inflation of the tyre, by diminishing the friction between beads and rim, gives the cover a better chance of shifting; so keep the driving wheel tyre well pumped up. A liberal application of French chalk will help to prevent the cover pulling the tube with it if it should slip a bit.

A SIMPLE CHANGE-SPEED GEAR.

Figs. 1 and 2 are two views of the adjustable pulley and the pedal for working it which are fitted to the 2½ horse-power Motosacoche Lightweight. The pulley is in two parts, which are separated or brought closer together by moving the pedal seen in the bottom left-hand corners of the illustrations, so that the effective diameter of the pulley can be altered at will between two limits, and any variation of gear from 9 to 1 to 5 to 1 be obtained. To take up the slack of the belt when the gear is lowered, the small jockey pulley on the left is raised by a Bowden wire operated from a lever on the handle-bar.

SIDE-CAR WORK

As the side-car seems to be still increasing its enormous popularity, and, presumably, a number of Captainites often drive or ride in a side-car, a few remarks about this aspect of motor-cycling will not, I hope, prove a waste of space.

Beginning with the machine, one may safely lay it down that the engine should be of at least 3½ horse-power, and have a two-speed gear. In flat country a single-geared machine may do well enough; but it must be confined to such country, as in hilly districts it will probably strike work, unless the engine power be considerably higher than 3½ horse-power. A two-cylinder 6 horse-power (with change-speed gear) will be found a very satisfactory pusher. If the rider is heavy himself and wishes to carry occasionally a couple of passengers, or a weight equivalent to a second light passenger in luggage, another horse-power or two is advisable. In any case, it is better to be over-engined rather than under-engined, so as to have a good margin for fighting strong headwinds—which are a serious factor if the side-car has screen and hood—ploughing through mud, and climbing stiff hills at a reasonably lively pace.

The only satisfactory alternative to a very powerful air-cooled motor is, in my opinion, a moderately powerful water-cooled one which can be run indefinitely on low gear without overheating. It will, of course, be slower on hills, but will get up them all right unless they be quite abnormally steep.

THE SIDE-CAR

In purchasing a side-car you must go first for safety, then for comfort. Safety demands

a very strong wheel spindle and a substantial and rigid attachment. Comfort requires a body with plenty of leg room, so that the passenger may straighten his or her knees out, and a seat back tilted to an angle which is sufficiently obtuse to ease the hip muscles, but not so much so as to make the car a sort

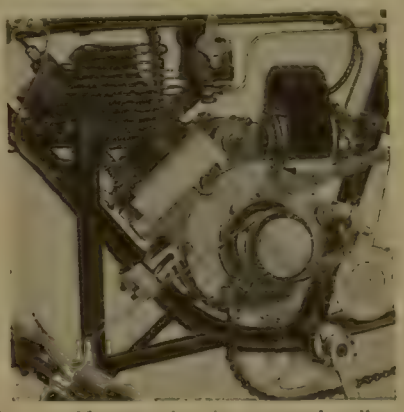


FIG. 1.—Motosacoche change-speed pulley in high gear position.

of couch. Good springing is of first importance, and if the tyre is of generous size it will pay for the slight extra cost by the greater enjoyment that the passenger will derive from a ride on it. If I were selecting a side-car I should certainly insist on riding in it a good distance over a pretty bumpy road before parting with my money; as I have before now been offered very nice-looking outfits which I should be sorry to condemn a friend to for a day's travelling. The passenger ought theoretically to be more comfortable than the driver; for if this condition be assured, the driver, who controls the pace, will find things becoming uncomfortable for him before his passenger is inconvenienced; while the passenger, if bumped about, will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that the driver is faring worse.

USING THE SIDE-CAR

As a cycle attached to a side-car cannot be heeled over by movements of the body, special care is required at curves and corners. The action of centrifugal force tends to upset the combination towards the circumference of the curve; and this tendency may be assisted by the camber of the road when a turn is made to the right—assuming the driver to keep to his proper side. It is therefore necessary to throw the weight over deliberately towards the inside of the curve, to overcome this upsetting action, at any but very moderate speeds. The passenger should do his or her share, not leave everything to the driver. Quite a small inward inclination of the body will relieve the attachment of a good part of the strain that might otherwise be thrown upon it.

A WONDERFUL ENGINE

The motor which drives a cycle or car thousands of miles without making any fuss or requiring any attention beyond feeding with "mixture" and lubricating oil, and the occasional cleaning of the cylinder head, and perhaps the grinding-in of a valve, is indeed a very wonderful piece of machinery. Take the case of a motor-cycle engine which has done its twenty thousand miles—a total not at all out of the way. Assuming that it is so geared to the driving wheel that it revolves 4½ times to revolve the wheel once, it must have made nearly seventy million revolutions while travelling the distance specified. Once every two revolutions the cylinder and piston are exposed to a temperature of 3,000° to 3,500° Fahrenheit while an explosion is in progress, and a heavy strain is imposed on the gudgeon pin, crank pin, and bearings, the shock having the nature of a blow rather than of a hard push. Yet the effect of all this heating and knocking about may be, in the case of a high-class engine, indeterminable even by delicate measuring apparatus. The interior of the cylinder acquires a glassy surface, the exterior of the piston rings a bright polish, caused by the travel of the rings and the interposition of an extremely thin film of lubricating oil. I have recently examined an engine which has done nearer thirty thousand than twenty thousand miles, and in no part of it could I detect anything which could be classed under "wear." Pins and axles were as free from shake as the most exacting mechanic could desire, and

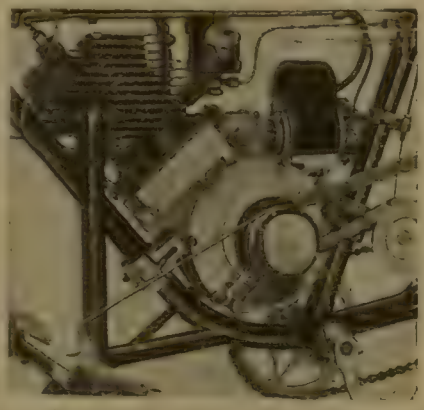


FIG. 2.—Motosacoche change-speed pulley in low gear position. The pedal gear in bottom left-hand corner has been pushed forward, opening the pulley. The jockey pulley, on right, has been raised by a Bowden wire to take up slack in belt.

apparently the engine was in as good condition structurally as the day it left the factory. This shows what good metal, protected by good lubrication, is capable of. The valves are perhaps the most wonderful items of an explosion engine. How they stand up to the

tremendous hammering imposed upon them by the sudden release of the springs, the compression of which requires a considerable muscular effort, is a bit of a mystery.

THE RUDGE-WHITWORTH "MULTI"

Rudge-Whitworth are nothing if not original, where originality promises improvement. Take their 5-6 horse-power machine, which has been designed specially for side-car work. It has a single cylinder with overhead mechanically operated inter-valve, the bore being nearly 3½ins., and the stroke about 5½ins. The engine, therefore, belongs to the decidedly long-stroke class which has become so popular in motor-car design. The piston has only one ring instead of the two or three usually employed, but this is so carefully finished that it makes a perfectly gas-tight joint.

Power is transmitted from the crankshaft through a multi-plate clutch, containing twenty-four pairs of hard steel discs, to a pulley, one side of which can be moved sideways by means of a lever on the left-hand side of the machine, so as to alter its effective diameter. The belt rim is constructed on a similar principle, and is geared to the engine pulley in such a manner that it expands when the other contracts, and *vice versa*. Therefore, the tension of the belt is not affected; and, as the alterations in effective diameter are in opposite directions in pulley and belt rim, a comparatively slight movement of the lever has considerable influence on the gear ratio.

DRIVING A "MULTI"

The rider starts on the lowest gear. Should the machine have come to rest when a fairly high gear was in, he starts up on the stand and lowers the gear. The clutch is then thrown out, the wheel let down, and everything is ready for taking the road. As the machine gathers speed, the lever is moved gradually to raise the gear. Note that the lever can be left in any one of twenty or so positions, and will remain in that position until again deliberately moved. In other words, there are about twenty different gear ratios. Instead of constantly varying the amount of "mixture" admitted to the engine, to maintain a certain speed of travel, the rider can keep his engine running briskly on half throttle and govern his speed by means of the gear lever, though he always has "full throttle" in reserve if the conditions should become exceptionally severe. If only we could get the same facility in the transmission of a motor-car! I need hardly point out that the side-carist will often have occasion to bless the flexibility which the long gamut of gears provides.

Experiment has proved that the efficiency of this gear at any ratio is as good as that of a "fixed" gear of the same ratio, which cannot be claimed for change-speed gears which make use of trains of wheels. Moreover, the alterable pulleys enable gear to be changed without anything in the nature of a jerk, and operate quite noiselessly under all conditions.

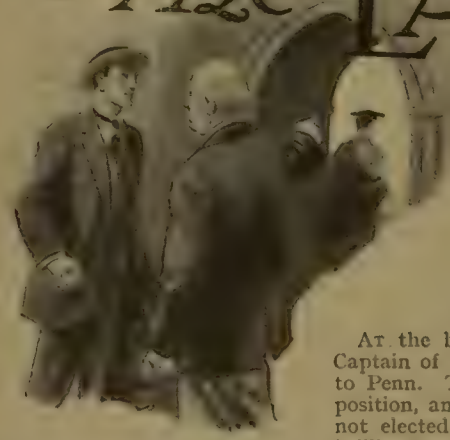
ANTI-FRICTION BEARINGS

The fitting of ball bearings to the axles of a motor-cycle engine may now be regarded as standard practice. The Rudge engine contains a further notable refinement in the employment of roller bearings at both ends of the connecting rod. The roller bearings are found to run more freely, lubricate themselves more thoroughly, and last longer than the plain bearings which are commonly used at these very important points of an engine's internal economy. The long-stroke roller-bearing engine has been run for long periods on the bench at 3,200 revolutions per minute, developing 10 horse-power without giving any trouble at all, whereas a similar engine with plain bronze bushes could not be got to develop more than 8 horse-power; the difference being attributable to the fact that friction is greatly reduced by the rollers.

CAREFUL BALANCING

Many single-cylinder engines set up vexatious, and even dangerous, vibration at high speeds. The Rudge engine's fly-wheel is balanced in an original manner, by inserting plugs of a heavy metal alloy into holes drilled near the circumference on the side farthest from the crank-pin. A few grains weight may make all the difference between good and bad balance. Repeated tests and the removal of a tiny bit of this plug or that enable the workman to obtain a perfect balance, which is proved by the engine running quite smoothly when pushed to its limit of speed.

The LAST of HIS LINE



By GUNBY HADATH

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell

SYNOPSIS OF OPENING INSTALMENTS

At the beginning of the January term it is announced that the Captain of Kellcaster School is not returning, and the captaincy falls to Penn. The latter is the sixth member of his family to hold the position, and it had been a great disappointment to him that he was not elected to it last term. Unlike his five brothers, he is not brilliant at sport, and the more thoughtful Kellcastrians wonder whether he will be equal to the task of maintaining his newly acquired authority.

Among the new boys is an eighteen-year-old American named Maxon Rope, whom Penn discovers teaching the juniors baseball when they should be playing football. Rope is defiant when Penn informs him that he must conform to certain unwritten school rules. The American collects a few juniors, including Gage and Ellis, known as the Persian Lambs, sows in them the seeds of rebellion against school traditions, and proposes that they form themselves into a league to strike for the "rights" of juniors, calling themselves the Birds of Freedom.

Though the school does not know it, Penn is working for an important 'Varsity scholarship, and, advised by the head master, he spends a week-end in Cambridge to interview a don. While there he calls upon his brother Jim, who is troubled by a horse-dealer who has a grudge against him, and threatens, unless he receives thirty-five pounds by an early date, to report Jim Penn for "breaking gate," an offence for which he would most probably be "sent down."

CHAPTER IX

NEXT TERM

THE Birds of Freedom were naturally elated when they returned after the Easter holidays to find that Maxon Rope had been moved into a study. Remembering how their P. and F. had demonstrated that one fellow was as much entitled to a study as another, they rejoiced that at last he had the opportunity of translating principle to practice.

Gage and Ellis, as might have been expected, were the first to test his principle. They found him hanging pictures, having just squeezed out of sight (behind the door) a groggy wicker chair which they themselves had given him that morning. For two shillings and a fountpen they had bought it from the Maggot, who had swopped it with Willett, who had purchased it last term at Potter's auction.

The Persian Lambs unearthed the chair, and made a rush for it; but Gage secured it, and when he had dropped back and closed his eyes he drew a sigh of drowsy satisfaction.

"I say—is it comfy?" Ellis asked, impatiently.

"Top-hole!" Gage murmured, then he snored.

When Ellis thought his time was up he remarked that it was his turn to have a squat. Gage showed no symptoms of rising, so Ellis jogged the chair and tried to jerk him out. Too venerable for such a strain, the wicker creaked, protesting noisily.

Rope had been too busy with his pictures to pay much heed to them, but now he swung round from the wall, a hammer in one hand, a print of Boston Harbour in the other. So well as the nail between his lips permitted, he inquired what they fancied they were doing.

"Doing, Rope?" Gage murmured. "Nothing! We're just trying our chair."

"Your chair!" Rope ejaculated, as he almost swallowed the nail. "Your chair! I thought you gave it to me."

"Oh, yes," smiled Ellis, "we did, for us to use, Rope."

Having dropped his hammer and his print, Rope seized an ear of each and drew them gently towards him.

"Now, put me wise," he drawled. "Do you imagine that this study belongs to you?"

Obliged to hold their heads askew and gingerly, lest the grip upon their ears should hurt them, the Persian Lambs did their best to amalgamate this unconventional attitude with an air of injured innocence and amazement. They looked at Rope without a word.

"For if you do," he went on, cheerfully, "you're wrong." He tweaked their ears. "Now cut," he smiled, and pointed to the door.

The Persian Lambs reached the door, but turned there. Half in, half out, they took up the argument.

"It's our study," said Ellis, "as much as yours."

"Oh, is it?" Rope said, airily.

"Of course. You've always said that one chap has no more right to a study than another——"

"And if we hadn't thought you meant it," Gage interposed, "we'd never have given you that chair, Rope. No, we wouldn't!"

"You were furnishing for yourselves then, eh?" said Rope.

"And for the other Birds of Freedom. They'll all come here."

"I see," Rope drawled, ominously. "I see."

Gage advanced into the room again, leaving Ellis to secure the line of retreat.

"The Birds, Rope," he continued, "look on it as a sort of common study. We'll make it our new meeting-place. Much more convenient than the old one, don't you think?"

"Oh, chalks more!" cried Ellis, over his shoulder.

Rope finished the suspension of Boston Harbour before he turned, and eyed them with a slowly kindling amusement.

"I see," he reiterated; "yes, I see. Well, you listen, and I'll give you my idea of it. The Birds will meet where they always met last term, and if I see them in this study I'll fire them. You take that as a cinch from me. It's my study. It isn't yours or theirs."

"But you always said——" began Gage, backing a pace.

"You've heard," Rope interrupted, "what I say now."

"Then the Birds aren't practising what you preach," cried Ellis.

"Say, am I the boss of that society or you?"

"Why, you, of course," they answered.

"Then leave me with the brain business. But don't think you can josh me into giving you the run of this place. You're too fresh altogether. See?"

"Then I don't see that the Birds are any good," persisted Gage.

"Oh, ain't they? I've got a scheme ready that will raise the hair of some of the old hoodoos in this school."

"All the last one raised was weals," said Gage. "Weals upon the Birds of Freedom!" He spoke warmly, for the subject was still painful.

"Yes," Rope muttered, smiling; "yes, I admit we came a crasher there. I was calculating, you see, that you'd have as much privilege in the debating society as I had; I forgot that I was a member and you weren't. But next time——" He stopped to chuckle softly. "Now, get out!"

The Persian Lambs departed ruefully, very sore with their P. and F., and very determined at the earliest opportunity to abstract that basket chair. For all his fine professions Rope seemed no better than any other study man, and what would Willett and the Maggot have to say, they wondered?

At post-haste to discover, they were galloping down the corridor when a door opened and the captain himself emerged. They were into him before they could pull up.

"I thought you kids knew better," Penn remarked, "than to clatter down the corridors like madmen."

His tones were not at all wrathful, but their heads dropped in confusion. Even the Persian Lambs, with all their high spirits and irreverence, felt something very like an icy douche when the captain spoke to them. For Kellcaster, you see, was not learning to understand its captain any better, and his indifference to their feelings was not making him popular. When the end of last term had arrived without any discovery of the motives which kept him to himself so much, and the seniors found that he had not avenged their dignity upon Rope, they had decided to leave him to go his own way.

And the juniors naturally took their cue from this. Aware of the coolness between Penn and his contemporaries, and believing that his interest in themselves extended only to the exercise of an iron rule, they labelled him "sarcastic beast," and ejected him from further place in their regard.

While, as if he were fated to please nobody, slacksters of the Fairbrother and Legge type, and all the turbulent who had looked forward to good times, were learning that if Norton

had been the frying-pan Penn was the fire, and that the former makes the more comfortable tenement of the two.

"After all," they growled, "one didn't mind so much being slain by Norton. He did do things, anyhow, you know. But Penn's no good at any mortal thing."

"Except to mug," perhaps someone would remind them.

"Oh, yes," they scoffed. "Except to swot all day!"

Now knowing Gage and Ellis as a merry pair, and remembering how very little shyness they had shown as standard bearers in the "scarecrow" incident, Penn was astonished to perceive how sullenly and dumbly they dropped their heads before him. So he repeated his inquiry anent clattering down corridors, with a smile, as a hint perhaps that he was neither so beastly nor sarcastic as they thought.

"And by the way," he went on, lightly, "aren't you the two they call the Persian Lambs? You don't sound very lamb-like."

He expected them to raise their heads and grin, but neither of them smiled nor spoke.

"You *are* the Persian lambs?" he laughed.

They studied their toecaps mutely. Banter from the captain seemed unnatural, uncanny.

"In Persia, don't the lambs have tongues?" he asked.

"I don't know," Gage mumbled at last.

So Penn dismissed them with a gesture of disgust, and standing for a moment to watch them down the corridor, he did not fail to notice that no word passed between them.

But the Persian Lambs would have been surprised, perhaps, could they have seen and heard him as he banged back into his study. Sore and stung that any two youngsters should evince so much dislike for him, he sat down almost savagely to his work again, and bitterly apostrophised his "Liddell and Scott."

"No, I'm not what you'd call popular," he told it. "By Jove! I'm not. I never saw two kids curl up so much!"

He drew the lexicon towards him; but for once his thoughts refused the task to which he tried to bend them. They leaped the rails and dragged him after them, until they landed him with Jim at Cambridge. What a good thing that Jim had so far staved his trouble off! How lucky that Pepperdine had been persuaded to take another bill!

One Penn was coming a cropper enough at Kellcaster; thank goodness another wasn't doing ditto at the 'Varsity!

His fingers closed over the lexicon and shut it, for his mind would not return from Jim's dilemma. Yes, he had staved the trouble off, but only staved it; and out came the letter Jim had written him that morning. With a blue pencil he underlined one page of it, just as he marked the passages in his "Tacitus" that vexed him.

Then for the seventh or the eighth time he read the marked page through:—

As you know, I got old P. to take a new bill. It's due next month, and I haven't got the faintest chance of finding the £35 to meet it. But imagine my astonishment when yesterday the hound came with another offer. It seems that somebody's been pulling his leg by telling him that I do know where the man who let his gee down is; anyhow, he's got a bee in his bonnet that I do, so now he offers to give me back my bill as soon as I produce the brute. I needn't pay a penny, he says, if I'll do that. Of course I've no idea where Spalding is, but if I knew I'd give him up like a shot ——

"Of course," Penn commented.

for acting in such a beastly, low-down manner. To pose as an undergrad still when he's not, to hire a gee on the strength of it, to break the poor beast's knees and bunk off without any explanation—well, that's about the limit to my mind and doesn't deserve shielding. No, I'd half a mind to turn detective ——

Penn paused to laugh outright. The picture of Jim as a detective was rather killing.

Seriously, if I could only find the brute I'd escape from this beastly mess (all his doing, Den), for I haven't the earthliest of finding the oof. I'll be sent down, or rusticated for a term at least—for certain. It's giving me the hump.

There was more, but this was all that Penn had marked, and all that he kept pondering on.

It seemed obvious that the liveryman's new offer was inspired by vindictiveness against the mysterious Spalding who had served him such a scurvy trick. But was he actually under the impression that old Jim could produce the fellow if he liked? Or did he tack on this condition to salve his conscience for his treatment of Jim? Would he really forgo his money to get hold of Spalding? Penn wondered.

Perhaps he wouldn't, if it came to it; but at any rate he had made the offer, and must keep to it if Jim could fulfil his part. Had Pepperdine put it into writing? He would drop a line to Jim to-night, he thought, and tell him to be sure and get this done. For, unearthly as the chance must be of finding the elusive Spalding, there was equally no harm in taking precautions——

With a start Penn roused himself, and taking his runaway mind by the throat, as one might say, he dumped it back without ado in Kellcaster. He could have sworn to a reproachful air about his "Liddell and Scott" and to a look of positive censure upon those normally so placid features of Athena which face the Seventh Pythian in Gildersleeve's "Pindar." "I beg your pardon," Penn was moved to say. "Now for you." And he plunged into the celebration of Megacles who conquered in the four-horse race—

"Athens, mighty city, most beautiful of proems——"

Without, gay sunshine and the cheerful hum of Kellcaster at play. But within, no movement save the rustle of the page, and anon a muttered adjuration on the poet who wrote such difficult Greek. Pindar, son of Daïphantos, had become Penn's bitterest bane.

After he had put Penn "through his paces," Mr. Beestock had been careful not to commit himself in his report to Pater Bovo. Mr. Bullock would know as well as he did—the cautious don had written—that scholarship examinations were more or less a lottery; but, well, the boy had parts—oh, parts assuredly—and a sense of confidence, and as much or little chance as most of drawing a prize. Provided always that he kept his work up.

But Pater Bovo knew his chary don, and reading between the lines felt almost satisfied. So he encouraged Penn to persist in his ambition, and on deliberation had agreed that no mention should be made of it in Kellcaster until Penn actually went up for the exam. For he saw that his mind was set on this reserve, and feared that its refusal might react and spoil his work. He had turned out too many successful scholars not to know that when a boy stands upon the eve of a competitive examination you should handle him as delicately almost as you would the most sensitive racehorse in training for the Derby.

For forty minutes Penn worked on steadily, and he had worried through to the last lines of the Ode, wherewith the sage old poet leaves the all-victorious Megacles with a warning against (as Penn put it) a "swelled head," for—

> All fortune that abides in bloom
> Brings man its ups and downs.

when his reflections on the quaint appositeness of the verse to his own circumstances were disturbed by a bang upon the door, and the appearance, while it rattled still, of Musgrave.

Musgrave entered boisterously, to conceal the fact that he was feeling far from boisterous. As a matter of accuracy he felt diffident and almost shy; because the relations between himself and Penn, which had been almost intimate a year ago, had never been the same since the captain's refusal to "slay" Rope. And it had hurt the transparent, honest Musgrave to reflect that any shadow should fall between them. Perhaps it had hurt Penn also—but his was not the nature to show it.

So enter Musgrave, trying to mask his nervousness of the subject he had come to broach. And no sooner did his eye fall on Pindar, son of Daïphantos, than he pounced upon the book, exclaiming:—

"Penn! Whoever's this Greek Johnny? I don't know him!" For at Kellcaster the Sixth have not reached "Pindar."

"He's a poet," said Penn. "He interests me." And this was true enough, though in a sense that baffled Musgrave.

He scrutinised the Ode, but could make neither head nor tail of it.

"Oh, a poet?" he commented. "Well, my word he looks illegible. Catch me reading any beast I'm not compelled to. No, Æschylus is quite enough for me."

"And for most of us," Penn answered, drily.

"Then why *are* you tackling this Pindar chap?"

At Penn's heart, too, the tendrils of their old comradeship were stirring, and very nearly he confessed his reason. But, tell one, he reflected, and he might tell others; his secret and ambition would become public property. So he passed the question off with a light laugh, and picking up Pindar, son of Daïphantos, he flung him accurately upon his shelf.

"There!" he said. "And now, what is it, Mus?"

Almost two terms since he had called the other by the familiar abbreviation, and Musgrave, taking it as an invitation to remain and chat, rejoiced secretly and sprawled his long form in a chair. Thence he began speaking to the empty fireplace.

"Penn," he said, "you've noticed I haven't posted the team up for to-morrow yet?"

"The team against Barnsbury? Yes, I've noticed that," said Penn. "Unlike such an energetic cricket skipper as yourself. Why haven't you?"

"I haven't filled the last place yet, that's why."

"I see," said Penn. "Well, who are you going to try?"

Musgrave shuffled in his chair, frowned at the photographs upon the mantelpiece, shrugged his shoulders, and then, without turning round to Penn behind him, replied, with a rush: "I'm playing you."

The answer was such a laugh as a man might laugh at you if you informed him that he was the heir to the throne of England. It did not startle Musgrave, because he was expecting it.

"All the same," he said, in answer to what that laugh implied, "all the same, I mean to play you, Penn."

At this Penn joined him on the hearthrug.

"I'm sorry, Mus. I thought it was a jest," he answered, seriously. "Thanks, awfully, but I'd much rather you didn't."

"Why not?"

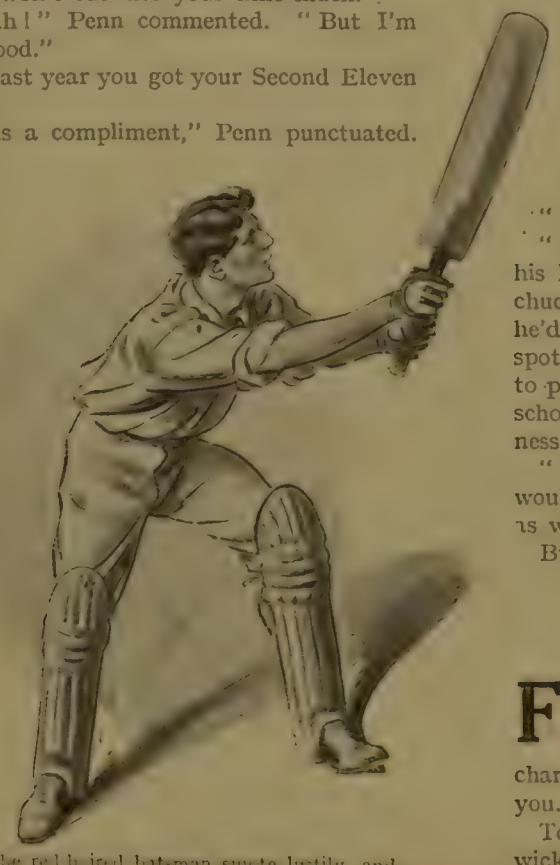
"For one reason, I'm not worth a place. For another, I'm too busy."

"One thing at a time," was Musgrave's answer. "We'll take your last reason first, old man." How easily the "old man" was coming to his lips again! "Match is here, so it won't cut into your time much."

"Ah!" Penn commented. "But I'm no good."

"Last year you got your Second Eleven cap."

"As a compliment," Penn punctuated.



The red-haired batsman smote lustily, and—

"You made fifty for the Second once."

"A frightful fluke!" Penn answered, cheerfully. "Missed twice before I'd scored, Mus. And five times afterwards."

"In the long field you chased them like a hare."

"And dropped the beastly catches—invariably."

"Well, anyhow, I've picked you for to-morrow."

"No; I'd much rather you did not. Besides, I haven't touched a bat yet."

"First match of the season. We're none of us in practice," retorted Musgrave.

Then stolidly he eyed the fireplace while Penn eyed him. Penn eyed him thoughtfully, and the more his quondam friend avoided his gaze the more convinced he grew that he was offered this place in the Eleven because he was the captain of the school. With a queer smile he expressed this view abruptly:—

"It's a long, long time I fancy since a school skipper hasn't been worth the team. Mus, I bet that's your idea in playing me."

"Oh, rot!" growled Musgrave, growing very red.

"You think it would be nearer the proper scale of things if I was played in one match, at any rate?"

"You're hot stuff in the out-field," stammered Musgrave.

Penn mused a minute, still watching the other.

"All right," he said at last. "I'll play."

"Good man!" cried Musgrave, and jerked his long legs up. And as he hastened off he chuckled, telling himself what a jolly blessing he'd stayed no longer, or Penn would have spotted his second reason, too, that he wanted to play him not only as a sort of lift up in the school, but to ease his conscience for his beastliness over the Rope debate incident.

"By Jove!" he cogitated. "How his pride would have jumped on me if he'd guessed that as well!"

But perhaps Penn had.

CHAPTER X

A MYSTERY

FEW who have played upon the Big Side ground at Kellcaster will dispute the peculiar charm of cricket there. It is a charm elusive and indigenous, which pursues you.

To the disappointed player, retired from the wickets with the rabbit's portion, and hence

at leisure to survey the scene, there is something peculiarly soothing in the grey outline of the school buildings behind, in the fringe of murmurous elms that intervene, and even in the buoyant billowy contour of the slope on which the rugs are spread. To the player *triumphans* there is more than exhilaration in the applause which hails him from the tenants of these rugs, as though the earth itself found voice to honour him. And there the effete onlooker, whose bat has been put by for good and all, shall drink deep of such *elixir vitæ* that his coat is fidgeting to be flung aside, his limbs aching to be at it with the best of them. Of such stuff is the magic of the Big Side ground at Kellcaster.

—the ball soared high, then seemed to be dropping pat into Penn's hands.

The wicket itself is a wicket of natural turf. No supermarled and overdressed pretender, whereon the ball shall rarely rise stump high, and the batsman may proceed by his machine-made forward push to a century mechanical and flaccid; but an honest creature of honest English grass, just lively enough to help the bowler who deserves help, just springy enough to keep the batsman thinking, just true enough to win the *cricketer's* love. For *his* wicket it is, and not the dandy's—and that is why you rarely read of mammoth scores at Kellcaster.

But nobody pays his first visit to the ground without inquiring, sooner or later, what that curious, flat-roofed, crumbling building is which flanks one corner, a stone's throw from the outfield? And the quaintest of quaint parapets around it!

"That," he will be told—"why, that we call the Ruin. It would have been demolished an age ago if it had not been the very oldest portion of the original school buildings; the bit that *was* the school, sir, when it started with fifty boys. Later it served as a gymnasium, before they built the real gym.; and now we only keep it there for sentiment. But it's unsafe, they say, so one day it'll come down with a crash. No, we can't take you inside it. The Ruin is out of bounds, sir, for the boys."

And the stranger will say, "Thank you," and dismiss the Ruin with a smile (or sigh) for sentiment.

As to-day's match was the first of the new season, Kellcaster had been unusually excited to see how Musgrave would make up his team. But nobody expected to find Penn's name on the board that morning, and his inclusion was decidedly sensational. As Fairbrother (who had secretly expected the last place) put it to Legge (who had been fancying his own chance), it was "the principle of the thing that was so sickening. What right had Musgrave to play a man who'd never once been near the nets yet?" And Legge based his dissent on principle also—so off with Fairbrother to talk about it.

When Penn strolled out to have a knock while Barnsbury were changing, his appearance

was the signal for an excited rush, as they flocked from every side to see how he would shape. He betrayed no disconcertment while they exchanged whispers on his style (or lack of it), and presently, with a nod to Staples, who had bowled to him, he passed thoughtfully to the pavilion. "He's thinking what a crock he is!" said Fairbrother.

But Penn was thinking about nothing of the sort. As a matter of fact his mind was full of Rope—how strange that the American had not been visible among his critics! To stand close behind the net, with his sharp nose thrusting through it; to glare, to pass facetious *sotto-voce* comment—that seemed just the sort of jape that Rope would have delighted in!

But perhaps Rope didn't mean to kick against the pricks this term. Perhaps now he'd got a study he'd settle down.

Penn's reverie was disturbed by the cheery voice of Musgrave, who remarked that he had lost the toss, and that Penn must field third man, and out at the pavilion end.

As he moved to his place there, fairly deep, to Staples bowling fast, he was devoutly hoping that he would not get a catch. For although he had exaggerated, maybe, in assuring Musgrave that he *never* caught them in the long, he knew very well that he lacked confidence and practice. And in "the country" more than anywhere, safe hands are spelled by these two.

However, the visitors' first pair never looked like testing him. From the respect which they accorded Staples you would have judged that that erratic slinger could have dispensed altogether with an outfield, for neither of them showed any inclination to open his shoulders. And it was Lynge at the other end, bowling a slow-medium of baffling length, who separated them at last, with a half-volley which the batsman sensed too late, and hit nicely into the large and grateful hands of Westinghouse. Lynge hitched his trousers, and eyed the retreating form sardonically.

"What I want to know is this," said he to Westinghouse: "Why didn't the juggins clump that ball out of sight?"

"Because," laughed Westinghouse, "you've all the luck, my son. I never knew anyone get so many wickets with rotten balls as you do."

"M'yes!" said Lynge. "And shall I tell you why? My length's so perfect the bad 'uns always surprise 'em." And probably he was right.

It was more by good luck than good management that Penn threw the next wicket down from third man. The new comer had edged Lynge, and the ball was travelling so slowly that his partner called for the run. Now Penn, as fate ordained it, was standing too near in (quite ten yards nearer than Lynge wanted him), and he had only to rush forward and gather the ball cleanly. He did gather it cleanly, and as Carter at the wicket screamed he hurled. Meaning to throw it into Carter's hands, by mistake he hit the bottom of the stumps—and up at the appeal went the umpire's finger.

Kellcaster upon the rugs cheered manfully. Kellcaster believed that Penn had meant it. Kellcaster said, "Jolly smart!"

And in its estimation it lifted Penn a peg.

Drearily as Barnsbury had begun, this sobered them still more. Not a risk of any sort would they run now: maiden after maiden followed from Lynge, and the long hops of Staples—which screamed apparently to be spanked—were suffered to come harmlessly to haven in Carter's gloves. With a lift of the eyebrows Carter glanced at Musgrave, and the glance said, "Staples is bowling tosh." Musgrave nodded, and tossed the ball to Baynes.

When Penn saw this and Baynes gestured him round, he felt more uncomfortable than ever. For the latter was a very slow left-hander, not at all afraid of being hit, who served up every now and then an especially sweet one on the off and middle. The batsman incapable of clumping it had never yet been seen at Kellcaster. Willy-nilly, Penn could not help the aspiration that to-day the batsmen would keep it on the ground.

And again the fates fought for him—for they did. If they did not hit it hard they hit it often, but they never hit it high. And the game dragged on without enterprise, till the telegraph showed seventy, and the rugs were growing restless.

"Too good a start!" they grumbled, as they rose reluctantly for dinner. And when they streamed out half an hour afterwards to see the umpires pocketing the bails for the lunch interval, the telegraph reading 95 for 2, that pair of stubborn bats had not been separated.

Groused Fairbrother to Legge, "Musgrave's a rotten skipper!"

Said Legge, "Oh, putrid! He's bowled Lynge far too long."

A score of two hundred is a winning score upon the school ground, and when they settled down to watch the start again they agreed that Barnsbury were getting on top. "Unless we out one of these two jolly soon——" they growled, and each completed the hiatus to his taste.

But if those are right who call the tea interval

the best change bowler on any side, the luncheon break has some claim to come second. It has sealed the doom of many a well-glued partnership. And so it was to-day.

For Fairbrother had barely time to ejaculate that that ass Musgrave was starting with Staples again, when the last ball of that lank and erratic individual's first over snapped the top of the leg-stump, jerked the bail as nearly as possible into Carter's eye, and sent Barnsbury's best bat upon his pilgrimage to the pavilion. He trod it to a salvo of applause, with a stolid, honest forty-seven to comfort him.

Ninety-five for three, and the rugs all smiles again.

At 147 for 7 a good fight had been assured: "With a shade in our favour, I fancy," Mr. Fellowes ventured, "if only we could shift that red-polled boy!" Mr. Fellowes looked less confident than he sounded.

For the youth of the red locks was something of a surprise packet. At the fall of the fifth wicket he had trailed languidly in, wearing instead of a cap a nervous semi-apologetic smile. ("A beastly bore this sort of jape!" it suggested. "But I shan't keep you a sec., really I shan't.") And instantly had stupefied Staples by pulling his first ball for a vicious four. When the next but one sped off at the same angle, Staples had frowned, fingered his nose reflectively, and with a look that spoke more grief than anger had moved Penn to the spot. Red Poll, thereupon, had driven him hard and straight.

So the 140 had been hoisted, and Musgrave had restored Penn to his former place, and dropped Baynes back as well, which afforded Kellcaster the unusual spectacle of two outfields to Staples. But Red Poll had not fallen; his partner went first, clean bowled by Lynge, and the smiter, looking more diffident than ever, sent the 150 up with a beautiful cut.

Then Musgrave beckoned Baynes again to change Staples. Sneered Legge to Fairbrother, "What captaincy! You'll see! That fellow will slosh Baynes into the next century!"

"Why doesn't he try Westinghouse?" echoed Fairbrother.

Penn must have been sharing their foreboding, for they saw him move back to the extreme edge of the boundary; if they had stretched their hands out they could have almost touched him from their rug. And Penn's discomfort was accumulating. He felt dead certain that a catch would come.

And it did—of course it did! Baynes tossed up his sweet one, and—who knows?—perhaps Red Poll's eyes were sparkling. But all that Kellcaster could see was his body, late crouched over his bat, released that instant as from a catapult, and the tigerish glee with which he sprang at it. Then up, and very high, it soared—to Penn.

It looked bound at first to soar over his head. But no—it was going to drop pat into his hands. He had not to move. He had only to stand exactly where he was—and take it.

A deadly stillness bathed the ground and rugs. In front of the pavilion Barnsbury watched, agonised.

"*Pretty Penny! Catch it!*"

It was in the awful instant of waiting for the ball that these words were uttered. They were not cried, but enunciated distinctly in a loud, gruff voice, which seemed to strike the cricket ground from space.

"*Pretty Penny! Catch it!*"

They startled Penn, and the ball slipped through his fingers to the ground, and rolled over the boundary. With a gesture of disgust he picked it up, and tossed it back to Baynes, who was expressing his feelings forcibly beneath his breath.

From the rugs behind Penn in the meantime everyone had risen, and they were asking one another furiously who had shouted at and balked him? Nor were any more savage than Fairbrother and Legge. "If I find the beast I'll slay him," growled the latter.

Everybody on the ground had heard the words, and Musgrave found some difficulty in pulling his men together, while Barnsbury felt astounded and uncomfortable, and their captain half started from his place to assure Musgrave that none of them had shouted. But he turned back again, for the idea was too preposterous!

Yet what a slice of luck, they agreed, for them!

And Red Poll celebrated his escape by two more lusty boundaries.

Penn's irritation had been succeeded by some hard thinking as he crossed back to third man; but returning to the long-field for the next over he signalled Baynes to wait a moment, and beckoned Legge and Fairbrother from their rug. He whispered hastily to them.

"None of you fellows behind me cried out just now?" he said.

"No; nobody," they answered in a breath.

He eyed the distant windows of the schoolhouse dormitories.

"Legge, cut up to the dormitories, and see if anyone's there. Fairbrother, stroll casually

round the ground, but keep your eyes open. When you've spotted the whereabouts of Maxon Rope, come back and tell me."

And each upon his errand they departed, as Baynes began to bowl again.

Red Poll drove the first two balls hard back to him, and at the next, a trifle shorter, he sprang. But this time no crisp ring of bat upon its prey; instead, the rugs saw Carter whip the bails off, and Red Poll, without so much as one glance at the umpire, swing round and trot away. Stumped by a good yard, he needed no verdict to know that. "And the best knock you've ever played, young man!" his captain told him, as flushed and happy he was taking his pads off.

"I've a beastly thirst," was all the hero replied.

So Kellcaster could breathe again, and, having breathed, they shouted, as with the first ball of his next over Lynge caught and bowled his man—163 for 9 was not so frightful as once it looked like being.

As a bowler Lynge had one strange mannerism. When he was bowling well he made tremendous grimaces. Norton, whom Carter had succeeded with the gloves, had always declared that nobody on earth could "keep" to Lynge: "Upon my word," he vowed, "the mug upon the fellow would give Strudwick a fit!" And in the junior school it was popularly reported that Carter got over the difficulty by having a private rehearsal with Lynge before each match, and so inuring himself to every variety of face that Lynge could "make." This is probably untrue; but the junior school believed it.

And now, at any rate, when the last man had arrived and taken guard—he was a plump youth, whom Barnsbury were trying for the first time—he glimpsed such an agonised writhing of Lynge's mouth as he approached the crease, such an alarming bunching of the muscles of his cheek, that he almost dropped his bat in quick alarm. The bowler, he felt certain, was being suddenly taken ill. And it was only when the impact of the ball with the middle-stump restored Lynge's features to their normal cast, that the plump youth realised his fatal misconception. He went back mutely raving. (And to this day nothing will persuade him that Kellcaster's slow bowler does not get his wickets by making faces.)

A hundred and sixty-three all out—and the school rather dubiously debating prospects. Have Barnsbury much bowling? And who *was* it yelled like that at Penn?

And this was just what Musgrave, when he had pinned his batting order up, was discussing with Penn, as Mr. Fellowes joined them.

"I thought perhaps it had been shouted from the school-house dormitories," Penn told them. "But I sent Legge up, and there was no one there."

"Oh, no," said Mr. Fellowes, shaking his grey head. "It could not have come from there, Penn. It was not a shout. It was not pitched high enough." He turned to Musgrave. "Each word, if you noted, Musgrave, was on its normal key."

"To me," assented Musgrave, "it seemed like a huge voice speaking."

"Precisely. Could you recognise it?"

"Oh, no. It was absolutely unfamiliar."

"And to me. But I am sure that it did not come from the rugs. Nor, indeed, from any boy upon the slope."

"Then, sir, it's a mystery," said Musgrave. "It beats me."

"And me," sighed Mr. Fellowes.

Penn did not tell them where he had sent Fairbrother; but now as he saw the latter approaching he detached himself, and in a low voice, inquired: "Well?"

"I couldn't find Rope for a long time," Fairbrother answered. "Then I spotted him at the far end, by the trees, Penn."

"Was he watching the game?"

"Yes. Chewing some beastly gum. And watching."

"By himself?"

"No, Penn. With a lot of other men."

"All right!" said Penn, and went off thoughtfully.

CHAPTER XI

THE DISCOMFORTING OF MORE THAN ONE

"HAD Barnsbury much bowling?"

Unlike the rest of Kellcaster, the Persian Lambs refused to entertain this question: No, Barnsbury had *not*, they declared emphatically; didn't Kellcaster knock up three hundred and twenty something on the Barnsbury ground last season, and only last Saturday hadn't Claybury made 290 against them? Very well, then—weren't the school in for four hundred at least to-day? Of course we are, asserted the Persian Lambs.

Fidgeting on the extreme edge of their rug, Simpson Minor suggested that it was wrong to boast; but Gage's hand descended on him heavily, for Kellcaster's first pair were coming out.

And when play was actually in progress he was a rash man who chattered near the Persian Lambs. For they suffered nothing to distract them, as, bodies propped on elbows, heads on hands, they lay, a pair of statues, watching every ball.

Had Barnsbury much bowling?

To mark the fashion Baynes and Pearson shaped at the initial overs, you would have surmised that the visitors certainly *had* bowling. To watch the expressions on the rugs when Pearson fell at slip before the ten was posted, you would have inferred that Kellcaster was adopting your opinion. If Barnsbury had no bowling that wicket was a fluke.

"Hard cheese for Pearson," was the Maggot's verdict; but Gage shook his head austerely.

"No. Absolutely putrid stroke," he said. And the Third chorused: "Absolutely putrid stroke!"

Musgrave came jauntily to the wicket, for, as we have seen, the more nervous he felt the more he tried to disguise it. And to-day he was convinced that he would fail, because while changing into his flannels he had put his left sock on before his right. To the superstitious cricketer there is no omen more dire.

When his first ball whipped back quite three inches and flicked the bails abroad, Musgrave felt no astonishment whatever. "Of course," he said beneath his breath, retreating. But the Persian Lambs, who knew nothing of the sock catastrophe, found the disaster incomprehensible, and when Simpson Minor thought to forestall them by exclaiming "Rotten stroke," Gage protruded an elbow and rolled him off the rug. "That ball was unplayable, you little goat!" Gage added. And Willett sniffed, and the Maggot's brow grew black.

"If you ask me," murmured Parsons, "they've too much bowling!"

"I didn't ask you!" snapped Gage, testily. "I shouldn't be such an ass."

"All right," growled Parsons. "Keep your hair on!"

"And if you say another word ——" cried Ellis, rolling over ominously.

But better times were coming to placate them, and presently this rug was cheering gleefully as Carter helped Baynes to stem disaster. With as much time as they wanted to get the runs, these two set stubbornly about their task, and since both were spared such a brute of a ball as Musgrave's, they succeeded in wearing down the first two bowlers. At thirty-seven Barnsbury's captain changed both ends, and at fifty Carter was looking more than comfortable. "Well hit!" the Persian Lambs screamed each time he found the boundary, and the Maggot, hugging his fat legs, began to glow. At sixty, Simpson Minor was received back on the rug; but five minutes later Gage dislodged him again—for Baynes had fallen to a catch at point. A hard smack it was, rather wide and travelling, but point had shot one hand out and the ball had stuck!

"Now that," sighed Ellis, "is what I call bad luck." When, perceiving Simpson Minor edging back, "No, you can't come back," he said, "till eighty's up."

"But eighty for how many wickets?" asked Simpson, dismally.

"Eighty for no more wickets," Gage replied.

"Then I'll never get back at all," the pessimist groaned.

And he was right. For when Westinghouse came in (and out) immediately, the forlorn Simpson was banished in quest of hospitality elsewhere. He must find a vacant corner on someone else's rug; with sixty-five for four there was no mercy in Gage. And Lynge succeeded to fill the vacant crease to the lively anticipation of his last Barnsbury victim, who, fielding at mid-off, was expecting an exhibition of weird grimaces.

But Lynge the batsman bore no resemblance to Lynge the bowler. At the wickets his features might have posed for impassivity, and when mid-off crept nearer to make sure it was the same, a hard hit whizzed above him that might otherwise have rested in his hands.

"Get back, you ass!" the bowler was adjuring him.

"Come on!" cried Lynge, much gratified, to Carter. They ran three for it.

But a hundred in round figures to make to win, and only six wickets to make them with. And if Lynge and Carter were parted pretty soon, who *was* there? Staples might scrape a few, and Thomson Major might give it the long handle; but Edwards and Hallett were very doubtful reeds.

"You're forgetting Penn," said Fairbrother to Legge.

Legge extended his cheeks until his mouth described a circle.

"I give Penn just as many as that," he murmured.

"Well, anyhow, Musgrave's put him in seventh wicket,"

"Before Edwards and Hallett? Then Musgrave's dotty!"

"A rotten captain—rotten!"

"Oh, putrid!" Legge assented for the third time.

Barnsbury were fielding now like men possessed. Sighting victory they gave nothing away, as the rugs bore testimony when each smart hit was just as smartly saved. And though well warmed to his work at last, Carter found it hard to get the ball away, watching oft and anxiously for the seventy—and the eighty—that took so long in coming. Would ninety *never* follow them?

Lynge, imperturbable, sat meanwhile on the splice. His policy was to leave the runs to Carter, and he never troubled apparently about the telegraph. But what was that frenzied cheering from the rugs? By Jove! yes. The hundred was being hoisted!

"Clap!" the Persian Lambs were screaming. "Clap!"

It is trite that sorrow treads the heels of joy. To every jubilant rug came Nemesis, when Carter, suffering his patience to relax, banged wildly at a yorker and was bowled. They cheered him to the echo as he turned and left, and another cheer when his fifty-two was signalled. Then they returned to the recast of their chance.

"We're whopped," the Maggot murmured, dismally.

But Gage and Ellis would not hear of it.

"Bah! Funk!" they answered. "Look! Here comes Staples!"

The visitors' captain made a wise move now. He restored his original bowlers, who had been thirsting in their exile to "have a go" at Lynge. They felt certain, each of them, that they could bowl him.

"Off-stump, please," asked Staples of the umpire, for he was full of a new theory that this guard strengthened his defence. When the first ball struck him sharply inside the knee, and the bowler followed it with a quiet, "How *is* that?" the anguish of the blow was drowned in a terrible suspicion that he was out. He rubbed his poor knee vigorously; but the umpire's hand was raised. So exit Staples, limping (and one-leg was his guard for ever after).

One hundred and four for six; and Thomson Major arrived, to "give it the long handle." Gloves he scorned, and truculent the roll-up of his sleeves. The rugs lay very silent, till Thomson missed two balls, when they gasped audibly. Next a yell—a yell in unison—for the third came sailing superbly into their midst.

"Six!" screamed Gage. "A hundred and ten *up!*"

Lynge stole a single, and the smiter fluked a three. It *was* a fluke, for trying to drive it he edged it between the wicket and his body. But they all counted, as Ellis aptly remarked. "Though not that sort," he added, when, later, Thomson offered the bowler a wild skier. The bowler took the gift; and Thomson went.

Forty-seven to win, forty-six to tie—and Penn's form issuing from the pavilion. He paused, they noticed, for a whispered word with Musgrave.

Eyeing the school captain as he advanced (sizing him up as we often do with incomers), the bowlers must have felt respect for him. His broad shoulders promised strength, his firm step resolution, his composure perfect nerve. Here, they must have fancied, was no rabbit. So much bigger, too, he was than most of the others.

Penn played out his first over; but the bowlers' respect had shrunk. So likewise had the wicket-keeper's and the field's. The man looked a cricketer—but was he?

And now Lynge knew that it was time to force the game. So he altered his methods (with the upshot of two boundaries), and found to his amazement that his partner responded cleverly to a short run. With no more sanguine estimate of Penn than Fairbrother's, he had expected to see a "stick" at the other end, who hugged his crease, unready to back up. But there he was—behold!—every whit as nippy as himself. So they began to call each other for short ones, and very soon were bustling the field.

Fairbrother glanced curiously at Legge. His friend looked back significantly. "Great Scott! He's not so hopeless after all!" their eyes said.

One hundred and thirty up!

And Barnsbury a trifle anxious.

Penn was feeling far from comfortable; but he was resolved, as one may put it, to sell his life as dearly as he could. So every ball he watched right up to his bat. Awkward he looked, and clearly ill at ease; but he was there still.

Now Kellcaster was hanging on every stroke.

With a neat cut, followed by two desperate stolen runs, the 140 was achieved—an achievement? Yes. So Kellcaster agreed—and then, as the bowler was swinging to his crease, across the ground those raucous tones rang, that harsh, loud voice that they had nigh forgotten:—

"*Pretty Penny! Give him easy ones!*"

Apparently the words issued from space. In the act of delivery the bowler dropped the ball. The fieldsmen stood transfixed.

But the coolest individual there was Penn.

With a queer smile he gestured the bowler to proceed.

"No, don't stop, please," he urged to Barnsbury's captain. "I don't mind a button, really."

"*Pretty Penny! Bowl him easy ones!*"

Perhaps it put the bowler off his stride. Though afterwards the former denied this roundly, and averred that the three balls in that over which Penn spanked for three fours were as good as any he sent down that day.

"Fact is," he confessed in the train homewards, "the fellow was red-hot with bottled rage. He could have hit any ball, anywhere—I know he could!"

Yet half the onlookers had not seen those fours.

For while the voice was speaking the second time they had glimpsed Musgrave bolting into the Ruin, and from rugs and slope the kids had bolted in his wake.

"*Pretty Penny! Bowl him ea——*"

It got so far the third time when it ended, broken off as though a hand had gripped the throat. But only those who had reached the Ruin itself could distinguish that the panting, dishevelled, struggling form which Musgrave and Carter rushed out the moment afterwards was Maxon Rope. And these were curtly bidden to cut off and attend to the game.

So Kellcaster obeyed, torn both ways by excitement. In the nick of time to see the 4 of the 140 change to a 5. Only fourteen wanted now, and Penn surviving still! But five runs later, when he was stumped ingloriously, you would have thought that instead of twenty-one he had made a hundred, so resonant was the school's determination to show him, this once at any rate, what it thought of Rope's mean trick. Rope? Yes, everybody knew the culprit now. But how, they asked, however did he manage it? No voice was loud enough to carry from the Ruin.

Edwards lasted two overs and saw the 160 up. When Hallett joined him Lynge passed the visitors' score with two sweet cuts, and the slopes rang jubilant for a victory hardly won. At 172 Lynge ran himself out.

As Penn advanced, the American squared his fists. "If you say another word," said Penn, "you won't have your thrashing now, you'll get it publicly."

"A fine game," was the visiting skipper's comment, as they adjourned to a belated tea, "and as there's only an hour left for play we'll catch an earlier train. If you don't mind, Musgrave?"

"You won't go on?"

"If it's all the same to you—no, thanks," was the reply.

So Barnsbury, whose taste forbade them to

make reference to the voice interlude, were tea-ed, and tubbed, and went upon their way. And so, the rites of hospitality discharged, Penn and Musgrave departed to the former's study, where in custody of Staples a prisoner was waiting. This prisoner was Rope, who looked a trifle nervous.

With a glance to Staples to retire (obeyed reluctantly) Penn turned to Musgrave :—

"Well?"

"Exactly as you guessed, Penn. On the flat roof of the Ruin there was a regular set-out of chairs, and my lord here, all alone, peering over the parapet with a megaphone."

"Yes, yes, of course," said Penn.

"He was jawing into it his beastly cheek to you."

Musgrave concluded with a dramatic piece of pantomime.

Rope's eyes flashed as he watched them, and seemed to be measuring the distance to the door.

"Musgrave," Penn said, locking it, "that was the only explanation possible. That's why I tumbled to it, and told you to be on the Q.T. when I went in. I wanted you to catch this man red-handed. You see," he explained, as the cricket captain looked puzzled still, "at that distance nobody could have managed a normally pitched voice without a megaphone. And the Ruin *was* the only place he could work it from. You found a lot of chairs there, too, you say?"

"A whole set-out," repeated Musgrave.

"Ah! Obviously the meeting-place of that foolish little society he founded."

Rope was recovering his self-possession. With a jaunty smile, he thrust his hands into his pockets, and set his legs apart.

"Of course," continued Penn, "you commandeered the megaphone?"

"I've smashed it into smithereens," cried Musgrave.

"Quite good."

Penn opened a cupboard, and selected a new ashplant. It was very green and supple in appearance.

"Now, Rope," he said, "bend over."

Rope's hand went quickly to the hair upon his upper lip.

"I'll do nothing of the sort," he drawled. "I defy you, Penn, to lick me."

"That chalks two more against you," Penn said, evenly. "Bend over, Rope."

The American was squaring his fists now. His jaunty air abandoned, he quivered with furious agitation. His manner was a curious contrast to the impassivity of Penn. Musgrave, ready to assist in the execution, was gestured not to interfere.

"Now, Rope," said Penn, looking straight into the American's angry eyes, "sensible people don't go into heroics. We know you're in the Sixth, and all that, but you should have thought of your dignity *before* you played your fool tricks. Presently that mill we talked about will grind you into a decent member of society, who's prepared to pay the penalty of his mistakes. Meantime, you're going to have a thrashing."

"I'm in the Sixth——"

"But you'd forgotten it."

"And I'm as old as you."

"You don't act as if you were."

"And if you touch me, Penn, you'll be sorry for it to your dying day. I swear you will."

Penn drew the ashplant significantly between his fingers.

"Rope, you may have it now," he said, "or you may have it publicly. If you say another word you won't get so much choice—you'll have it publicly."

For one instant the conflict of wills continued. Then Rope gave way, and for his courage it may be said that he neither winced nor uttered any cry. At the end Penn tossed the stick away, and, taking Musgrave's arm, remarked :—

"Now go, Rope."

But as he was unlocking the door, Rope seized him by the wrist. His eyes were blazing passionately.

"You wait," he said. "I haven't finished with you yet, Penn! I'll hurt you more than ever you've hurt me! I——"

These observations were concluded in the corridor. He concluded them upon all-fours, and panting.

CHAPTER XII

MAXON ROPE INSPECTS ABSTRACTS

MAJOR POWELL, bursar of Kellcaster and clerk to the school governors, was seated in the room under the archway which served him as his office, and the clock above Big School had just sonorously struck twelve. He sat at a square table on which lay a twin row of parchment documents, tied in tape and neatly docketed; sundry books of accounts, a pad of blotting-paper, a sheaf of unused foolscap, several clean quill-pens, and one flat and monstrous inkpot. Against him, facing his own comfortable leather chair, two

hard chairs of the straight-back kitchen class were standing, as one might say, at attention.

The air of preparation, of sober, orderly anticipation, which the major and his table offered, was reflected in the aspect of the room. It smelled of soap and water, and looked spotless; you could, as Parker would have put it, have eaten your dinner off the floor. Above the mantelpiece hung a print of Kellcaster in 1840; and from each of the distempered walls a group of the school governors looked gravely down.

And the atmosphere of ceremony which pervaded the prim bursar's office penetrated through the door, and was suggested by the straight form of Sergeant Cutlack, clad and medalled as on Speech Days, standing rigidly outside it. If any of the boys who passed winked and bestowed similar irreverent attentions (as the Persian Lambs, for instance, trotting up to remind him of the Roman sentinel at Pompeii, and other folk), their wit went begging. The sergeant deferred reprisals until he was off duty.

Although Major Powell had been a military man, he was neither a fire-eater nor pugnacious; but a pleasant gentleman who liked to feel a pen between his fingers, and loved to reckon discounts and percentages. An automatic sort of person, who lived by rule.

But this morning he was not exercised with bills; nor was he debating, as he did most often, the transference of the school's contract for soap. A duty of a larger but less onerous nature claimed him.

It was a duty which comes once a year, and is best expressed, perhaps, by a glimpse at the pertinent advertisement which had appeared a few hours earlier in the newspapers. It was the first announcement under the column headed—

LEGAL NOTICES

And it ran as follows:—

KELLCASTER SCHOOL, KELLCASTER

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that ABSTRACTS of the ACCOUNTS of the various trusts administered by the School Governors for the year ended March 31st last, with the Schedule of the ACT OF INCORPORATION, can be inspected as by the aforesaid Act required between the hours of twelve noon and one o'clock this day on application to the undersigned.

E. G. POWELL,

May 31st. *Clerk to the Governors.*

At first sight this looks surely like a large handful for the bursar! But in practice it boils down to a formality, an opportunity which he is bound to give the public by archaic provisions in the deed of trust. Year after year on the last day of May the clerk to the school governors has inserted his advertisement, and thought no more about it. For nobody has ever turned up to poke and pry among his deeds and abstracts.

Nor did Major Powell expect anyone to-day; but being a man of routine he spread his papers forth, equipped to sit thus till the clock chimed one, in readiness for a public who would not, he knew, respond.

At ten minutes past twelve he consulted his watch, yawned three times solemnly, and was about to pick up *The Times* when he caught the sounds of altercation outside. The gruff tones of the sergeant appeared to be arguing with a thinner, sharper voice, till suddenly the door shot open with the announcement:—

"A gentleman to see you, sir."

His visitor advancing with an air of easy confidence, the major, prepared to receive cavalry, so to speak, noticed that his teeth were very white, his expression very bland, and his smartness and attire suggestive of church parade. He realised next that the face appeared familiar, and finally that this was one of the boys in the school. Thereat his manner changed.

"I am busy," he said, sharply. "You have no right here."

With an amiable smile the new comer advanced.

"My name," he said, "is Maxon Rope. I have come, sir, if you please, to inspect the abstract of accounts. In accordance, sir, with your advertisement."

An astounding request, and it made the bursar gasp.

"You are," he stammered at last, "a boy here! On my word!"

Fingering the hair upon his upper lip, Rope went on evenly.

"But the trust deed, sir, does not exclude boys, or any who benefit under the trusts, from the public right of examining the abstracts. Or does it?"

If his demand was astounding, his language was scarcely less remarkable. Or so it seemed to the prim bursar, whose first impulse to eject him willy-nilly was yielding to a feeling of amusement and respect.

He was amused by his visitor's old-fashioned air, and by the idea which had led him to don his Sunday garb for the occasion. His respect, as a man of rule and routine, was drawn to the correctness with which the boy expressed himself. And he was perfectly aware, moreover,

that Rope's question had only one reply. The right to inspect excluded nobody.

"But the Act," he remarked, when he had admitted as much, "never contemplated an application by boys."

"Still, there's the plain law of it, sir," Rope countered. "I can inspect."

While a bursar less precise might have flung both ceremony and the intruder to the winds, the major's punctilious, red-tape sense of duty would have been outraged by such action. He was there, he reflected, to obey the letter of the law, and if the boy persisted in his claim he had neither right nor pretext to deny it.

"You mean this really?" he exclaimed at last.

"If you please, sir—yes," said Rope.

Indicating one of the chairs that stood at attention, the bursar pushed towards him some bundles of ruled papers.

"The abstracts," he said, stiffly.

And now the visitor was thoroughly in his element. With pursed lips, puckered brows, and the utmost air of gravity he scrutinised those balance sheets, and looked as if he really understood them. The major, watching him, was altogether baffled; but his face remained as icy as Rope's was blandly grave, and the pair completed a picture which the school would have given a good deal to see. Picture post-cards of "Rope inspecting Abstracts" must have sold tremendously in Kellcaster.

A quarter of an hour passed in this way: the one very stiff and silent, the long nose of the other glued over the papers. But Rope was enjoying himself hugely, and pondering what to do next. He was not going out till one o'clock if he could help it.

Replacing the last abstract in its bundle, and tying the neat tape again, he returned them with a bow.

"I thank you, sir," he said, politely. "May I now see the Schedule of the Act of Incorporation?"

"The what?" cried the astonished bursar, startled out of stiffness.

"The schedule, sir. As your advertisement permits."

It had entirely escaped the bursar's mind that this also was included in the right to inspect. But having complied so far he could not resist.

"I hope you know," he snapped, "that I consider this a piece of most astonishing—er—impertinence."

"I'm sorry, sir," Rope said, demurely. "I think you misconceive it."

"If you'd talk a little less like a patriarch, and——"

"I'm sorry, sir," repeated Rope. "Please, may I have the schedule?"

"Make haste, then," was the testy answer, accompanied by a bulky yellow parchment. "That is the Act of Incorporation. You will find the schedule on the last four pages. But mind you, mind you, boy, you have no right to read the Act itself. Only the schedule—so be careful."

Rope turned the folios till he reached the end.

"Ah, here it is!" he drawled. "The Act, I see, was obtained from Parliament in 1799."

"Just so," snapped Major Powell.

"And the schedule"—Rope's eye was running over it as he spoke—"is a summary or *précis* of the lines the school must follow, the aims of the foundation, and the restrictions and the privileges, sir, which bind the boys."

"Precisely," barked the major. "How old are you?"

"Eighteen, sir."

"Then, lad, wherever did you learn such language? You talk like a sea lawyer."

Rope disregarded this. Head and shoulders bent over the parchment he was too absorbed to answer. But all at once his eyes kindled, and his lips began to move as though he repeated something to himself—committed it to memory, perhaps. After several minutes spent in this way he returned the document.

"Thank you very much," he said, his eyes dancing with mischief. "And, Major Powell, does this Act express the wishes of the pious founders?"

A smile broke through the bursar's stiff reserve. Having discarded his air of age and dignity, Rope suddenly looked boyish. His manner had become ingratiating.

"Of course it expresses their wishes," was the pleasant answer. "And not merely their wishes, boy, but their wishes converted into law. The pious founders, as you call them——"

"Sir, as the Act calls them," Rope corrected.

"Yes, yes. The wishes of the pious founders *are* law."

"Good-bye, sir. And thank you very much."

"Good-bye," smiled Major Powell.

It was fortunate, of course, that the bursar had a sense of humour. A latent sense it was, not readily evoked; he was one of those people who enjoy a joke when everybody else has finished with it. And now it was only after his visitor had been gone some minutes that he leaned back in his chair, and laughed. But he laughed long and heartily.

THE LAST OF HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

"Come in here to pull my leg!" he chuckled. "The young image!"

Rope's movements, when he got outside, were equally significant. Loftily disregarding the sergeant's stare, he scribbled on his cuff, and then sped through the archway in quest of Gage. As it happened, he found the Persian Lambs at once.

"Say," he whispered, as he drew them apart, "I've struck the finest stunt of all. After school this afternoon, you two collect the Birds of Freedom in my study."

Now the Persian Lambs had not by any means forgiven Rope for his unpatriotic behaviour at the Barnsbury match. For several days thereafter, indeed, this had been a vexed and sore subject between their P. and F. and them. It was one thing, they protested, to strike for better times; but a jolly different one to do your best to stop the school from winning a match! And if their P. and F. meant that game——

So now they hesitated, and scratched the gravel with their toes.

"Your stunt!" Gage muttered, awkwardly. "It isn't another one like——"

Rope cut him short.

"No, not a bit," he laughed. "It's quite O.K., is this one. On my word, Gage."

"And we *can* meet in your study?"

"Yes, yes. And Ellis?"

"Yes, Rope."

"You can squat in that wicker chair."

"Oh," said the Persian Lambs, and eyed each other. "Your idea won't mean another whacking?"

Then Rope waxed earnest and persuasive.

"I tell you," he persisted, "it's the safest thing on earth. We're not going to break any rule, sonnies. But we're going to give them fits. And that's a cinch."

"Righto!" they cried. And ran off on their mission.

(*To be continued.*)

A PARACHUTE AEROPLANE

A new aeroplane invented by M. Domingo, the special feature of which is the safety parachute dome. The two ends are used as planes for raising or lowering the machine when in flight; and, in the event of a mishap, they are instantly closed, transforming the whole machine into a big parachute, which ensures an easy and safe descent. It is fitted with a 100 h.p. motor, and carries one passenger.

SCHOOL SPORTS RESULTS

School.	Long Jump.	High Jump.	100yds.	Quarter-mile.	Half-mile.	Mile.	Hurdles.
Alleyn's, Dulwich	C. B. Dansie 17ft. 9½ins.	R. A. Browning 5ft. 2½ins.*	R. A. Browning 11⅕secs.	W. H. Heron 58secs.	J. E. Appleyard 2mins. 23⅕secs.	J. E. Appleyard 5mins. 7⅘secs.*	L. H. Raybould 20⅕secs.
Bedford	A. G. Sturgeon 18ft. 4ins.	A. G. Sturgeon 5ft. 2⅝ins.	C. W. Fowler 11⅕secs.	C. W. Fowler 57⅕secs.	L. L. Brereton 2mins. 16⅕secs.	L. L. Brereton 5mins. 9secs.	A. G. Sturgeon 17⅘secs.
Bedford Modern	H. Day 19ft. 1½ins.	F. N. Palmer 4ft. 10½ins.	H. Day 11⅕secs.	H. Day —	W. James 2mins. 26secs.	W. James —	G. Young 19⅘secs.
Birkenhead	B. H. M. Jones 20ft. 4½ins.	B. H. M. Jones 4ft. 10½ins.	B. H. M. Jones 11secs.	B. H. M. Jones 57⅘secs.	W. H. Stott —	B. H. M. Jones 4mins. 50secs.	B. H. M. Jones 17⅘secs.
Bishop's Stortford	A. I. Rae 19ft. 3½ins.	—	L. F. Clark 11secs.	E. W. Edwards 59⅕secs.	—	V. R. Price 5mins. 11secs.	L. F. Clark 19⅘secs.
Blundell's	—	W. V. Hamilton 5ft. 1in.	W. H. Matthews 11⅕secs.	W. H. Matthews 58⅘secs.	—	R. G. N. Southey 5mins. 0⅘sec.	H. J. Paddison 20⅕secs.
Bournemouth	Reed 17ft. 5ins.	Spencer 4ft. 10ins.	Keene 11⅕secs.	Keene 62⅕secs.	Keene 2mins. 35secs.	Gothard 5mins. 59secs.	Keene 18⅕secs.
Bradfield	A. Gordon 18ft. 5ins.	J. S. Goslett 5ft.	A. Gordon 11⅕secs.	G. Rawnsley 58⅕secs.	R. Blake 2mins. 15⅕secs.	R. Blake 5mins. 1⅕secs.	F. J. Hollowell 18⅘secs.
Brentwood	Parmenter 16ft. 8ins.	Bulgin 4ft. 7ins.	Reynolds 11⅘secs.	Reynolds 61⅕secs.	Reynolds 2mins. 24⅘secs.	Boardman 5mins. 31⅕secs.	Reynolds 22⅕secs.
Bromsgrove	L. G. Elkington 18ft. 2⅕ins.	R. H. Chattock 4ft. 10ins.	C. M. F. Dewdney 10⅕secs.	H. M. Smith 56⅕secs.	H. M. Smith 2mins. 13⅕secs.	H. M. Smith 4mins. 58⅘secs.	L. G. Elkington 20⅕secs.
Charterhouse	C. J. Bowen 18ft. 3½ins.	H. E. Blumer 4ft. 11½ins.	C. J. Bowen 10⅘secs.	P. S. Hadley 55⅕secs.	H. A. Taylor —	C. E. M. Ellison 4mins. 44⅕secs.	W. R. F. Miller 19⅕secs.
Cheltenham College	J. P. Campbell 19ft. 1in.	J. P. Campbell 5ft. 1½ins.	H. D. Macconochie 11secs.	J. E. McLellan 58⅕secs.	J. N. Bailey 2mins. 18⅕secs.	R. W. B. Ardill 5mins. 14⅕secs.	J. P. Campbell 18⅘secs.
Cheltenham Grammar	W. B. Boone 18ft. 1in.	W. B. Boone & J. J. Morley 4ft. 10½ins.	G. Deakin 11⅕secs.	G. Deakin 60⅘secs.	R. Morley 2mins. 20⅕secs.	R. H. Deakin 5mins. 22secs.	—
Christ's Hospital	G. E. Middleditch 18ft. 6ins.	G. E. Middleditch 4ft. 11½ins.	F. H. L. Lenn 11⅕secs.	T. H. Evans 60secs.	D. H. Oliver 2mins. 24⅕secs.	Sauer 5mins. 27secs.	—
Clifton College	J. H. de L. Constable 17ft. 9ins.	F. V. Robinson 5ft.	C. B Gray & B. H. Petman 11⅕secs.	K. N. Crawford 59⅕secs.	J. D. Way 2mins. 17⅕secs.	J. D. Way 5mins. 9⅕secs.	R. B. Kennedy 19⅕secs.
Denstone College	G. L. Tomkins 18ft. 4ins.	G. L. Tomkins 5ft. 2ins.	A. Wilson 11⅕secs.	L. R. Helder & M. G. Taylor 60⅕secs.	G. J. Mitchell 2mins. 17⅕secs.	G. J. Mitchell 5mins. 22⅕secs.	G. L. Tomkins 20⅕secs.
Dover College	D. Brown 18ft. 8ins.	H. H. M. Oliver 4ft. 11½ins.	H. S. Thuillier 11⅕secs.	H. S. Thuillier 56secs.	H. S. Thuillier 2mins. 16⅕secs.	R. A. D. Brooks 5mins. 7secs.	F. C. G. Larkworthy 19⅘secs.
Downside	E. E. Trevor Jones & J. S. Mellis 18ft. 11ins.	F. V. Hallinan 4ft. 10½ins.	R. R. Stokes 10⅕secs.	R. R. Stokes 55secs.	R. R. Stokes 2mins. 16secs.	R. R. Stokes 5mins. 13⅕secs.	C. W. Bruce 20secs.
Dulwich College	A. E. R. Gilligan 18ft. 4½ins.	A. E. R. Gilligan 5ft. 3½ins.	A. E. R. Gilligan & S. J. Hammond 11⅕secs.	A. E. R. Gilligan 60⅕secs.	A. E. R. Gilligan —	A. E. R. Gilligan 5mins. 13secs.	A. E. R. Gilligan 19secs.
Eastbourne College	N. Charun 19ft. 4ins.	N. Charun. 4ft. 10½ins.	P. I. Mead 11secs.	P. I. Mead 56⅘secs.	P. I. Mead 2mins. 15⅕secs.	P. I. Mead 5mins. 17⅕secs.	N. Charun 18⅘secs.
Eltham College	A. L. Gracie 17ft. 2½ins.	W. B. Harmon 4ft. 8½ins.	D. W. Thomas 11secs.	W. B. Harmon 59secs.	—	D. W. Thomas 5mins. 22secs.	E. A. Claxton —
Eton College	J. A. Lord 20ft. 4ins.	R. F. Skerlock 5ft. 4½ins.	J. A. Lord 10⅕secs.	J. A. Lord 53⅕secs.	J. A. Lord 2mins. 20secs.	H.G.C.Streatfeild 4mins. 34⅕secs.	L. N. Kindersley 17secs.
Haileybury College	T. C. N. Hall 17ft. 10½ins.	H. D. Hake 5ft. 3½ins.	T. C. N. Hall 11secs.	H. D. Hake 55secs.	H. D. Hake 2mins. 10secs.	H. D. Hake 4mins. 55secs.	H. D. Hake 18secs.
Harrow	Vereker 18ft. 1in.	Makant 5ft. 1in.	Ingram 10⅕secs.	Anson 57⅕secs.	Mitchell 2mins. 13⅕secs.	R. Renton 5mins. 0⅘sec.	Vereker 19⅕secs.
Highgate	Allen —	Scott 4ft. 9ins.	Ashbee 11secs.	Ashbee —	Glendinning —	Seagrove —	—

* Denotes a school record.

School	Long Jump.	High Jump.	100yds.	Quarter-mile.	Half-mile.	Mile.	Hurdles.
Imperial Service College	Kappey 16ft. 11ins.	Hickie 4ft. 6ins.	Sergeant 11secs.	Kappey 58⅘secs.	—	Kappey 5mins. 4secs.	Lawson I. 20secs.
Ipswich	H. M. Brown 18ft.	V. A. Field 4ft. 9½ins.	H. M. Brown 11⅕secs.	H. M. Brown 58secs.	E. C. Stirling —	D. W. A. Nicholls 5mins. 8⅕secs.	H. M. Brown 21⅕secs.
King Edward VII., Southampton	R. I. Metcalf 17ft. 5ins.*	R. I. Metcalf & L. G. Kemp 4ft. 10ins.	R. I. Metcalf 12secs.	R. I. Metcalf 58secs.	R. I. Metcalf 2mins. 12secs.*	R. I. Metcalf 5mins. 7secs.	R. I. Metcalf —
Leighton Park	J.T.Wotherspoon 17ft. 2½ins.	R. C. Butler 4ft. 11ins.	R. C. Butler 11⅕secs.	R. C. Butler & J.T.Wotherspoon 59⅕secs.	H. Ransom 2mins. 16⅕secs.	D. G. Walker 5mins. 6secs.	A. F. Grierson & R. C. Butler 20secs.
Leys	F. H. Potter 18ft. 11½ins.	P. W. C. Northcroft 5ft. 1½ins.	J. Baxter —	F. D. Adam 58⅕secs.	D.W.Winnicott —	D. W. Winnicott 4mins. 54½secs.	R. W. Holloway 18⅕secs.
Loretto	W. M. Gray 19ft. 5ins.	W. M. Gray 5ft. 5½ins.	W. M. Gray 10⅗secs.	H. Peters 55secs.	—	—	—
Malvern	Willmot 19ft. 3ins.	Willmot 5ft. 4ins.	Carey 11secs.	Furley 58secs.	Heard 2mins. 23secs.	Furley 5mins. 19secs.	Carey 19⅕secs.
Marlborough	R. T. Pearce 18ft.	R. D. Busk 5ft. 1in.	J. Stevens 11⅕secs.	E. M. Sidebotham 58⅕secs.	N. C. F. Nixon 2mins. 14⅕secs.	G. P. Guilleband 5mins. 14⅕secs.	H. C. Shippard 18⅕secs.
Monmouth Grammar	M. Vyvyan 18ft. 1in.	M. Vyvyan 4ft. 8½ins.	M. Vyvyan 11⅕secs.	M. Vyvyan 58⅕secs.	—	M. Vyvyan 5mins. 13secs.	M. Vyvyan 19⅕secs.
Oundle	Threfall 18ft. 11ins.	Sanfuentes 4ft. 6½ins.	Hill 11secs.	Lyon Hall —	Orchard —	Orchard —	Lyon Hall 20secs.
Perse	J. H. R. Rawes 17ft. 6ins.	J. Love & P. Mason 5ft.	J. H. R. Rawes 11⅕secs.	J. Williams 57⅗secs.	J. Williams 2mins. 15secs.	F. R. Leavis 5mins. 12⅕secs.	—
Plymouth	Jago 17ft. 1in.	Vittle 4ft. 5½ins.	Beare 12⅕secs.	Beare 62⅕secs.	Vittle 2mins. 23⅕secs.	Vittle 5mins. 8secs.	Beare 19secs.
Queen Elizabeth's Barnet	K. K. White 18ft. 8ins.	K. K. White 4ft. 10⅕ins.	K. K. White *10⅕secs.	K. K. White 56⅕secs.	E. G. Kidd —	H. M. Williams 5mins. 24⅕secs.	K. K. White 17⅗secs.*
Quernmore	Sumner 14ft. 5½ins.	Schwaiger 4ft. 2ins.	Chavasse I. 12secs.	Fernandez 67⅕secs.	Hill II. —	Catchpole 5mins. 47⅕secs.	Schwaiger 18⅕secs.
Repton	G. F. Bell 18ft. 2½ins.	W. H. C. Cave & L.R.L.Learmouth 5ft. 1½ins.	G. F. Bell 11⅕secs.	G. F. Bell 56⅕secs.	B. F. S. Irwin 2mins. 13secs.	B. F. S. Irwin 5mins. 8⅕secs.	E. K. Parsons 19⅕secs.
Rugby	E. E. Goward 18ft. 0½in.	L. Chalk 4ft. 11ins.	F. I. D. Garforth 10⅗secs.	J. L. Freeman 56secs.	J. L. Freeman 2mins. 15⅕secs.	J. D. Willard 5mins. 4⅕secs.	F. I. D. Garforth 17⅕secs.
St. Bees	W. S. Glegg 18ft. 4ins.	J. D. Paisley 5ft. 1½ins.	H. L. Lewis 11⅕secs.	E. A. Frith 59⅗secs.	Orgill III. —	E. A. Frith 5mins. 27secs.	—
St. Edwards, Oxford	C. H. Martyn 16ft. 2ins.	B. L. James 4ft. 7ins.	C. S. Green 11⅕secs.	C. S. Green 58⅕secs.	—	C. S. Ranson 5mins. 7secs.	C. S. Green 18⅕secs.
St. Lawrence, Ramsgate	H. V. A. Corfield 18ft. 2½ins.	R. C. S. Browne 4ft. 11ins.	P. A. Bourdillon 11⅕secs.	E. B. Backhouse 59secs.	E. B. Backhouse 2mins. 22secs.	E. B. Backhouse 5mins. 16⅕secs.	H. V. A. Corfield 19secs.
St Peter's, York	W. H. Haynes 18ft. 7⅗ins.	E. P. Pattinson 4ft 10⅕ins.	W. H. Haynes 11secs.	W. H. Haynes 59⅗secs.	—	W. H. Haynes —	W. H. Haynes —
Sedbergh	Wakefield 18ft. 6ins.	Sheriff II. 4ft. 10ins.	Craigmile 11⅕secs.	Craigmile 58secs.	La Touche 2mins. 13⅕secs.	La Touche 5mins. 10secs.	Scholfield 20⅕secs
Shrewsbury	Haseler 16ft. 9ins.	Higgins 5ft.	Symes 11⅕secs.	Stuart 56secs.	Stuart 2mins. 10⅕secs.	Stuart 5mins. 0⅕sec.	Bennett 20⅕secs.
Stonyhurst College	G.C. O'Donoghue 18ft. 2½ins.	J. Maxwell-Stuart 5ft.	G. W. Tobin 11secs.	H. Lynch 57⅕secs.	H. Lynch 2mins. 13⅕secs.	H. Lynch 5mins. 3⅕secs.	H. Lynch 20⅕secs.
Tonbridge	Evans 16ft. 6½ins.	Bell & Mundy 4ft. 10½ins.	Baldwin 11secs.	Bickmore 54⅕secs.	Upsom 2mins. 13secs.	Tester 4mins. 56secs.	Atkins 18⅕secs.
Uppingham	C. H. L. Wynne 19ft. 11½ins.	H. F. Kitching 5ft. 2ins.	J. H. Crutch 10⅕secs.	J. W. Daniel 57⅕secs.	J. W. Daniel 2mins. 13secs.	O. C. Bryson 4mins. 53secs.	R. C. Greenlees 19⅕secs.
Victoria College Jersey	A. B. Boomer 18ft. 8ins.	K. G. Leask 4ft. 10½ins.	E. D. Butler 11⅕secs.	E. D. Butler 59⅕secs.	J. H. Hogshaw 2mins. 19⅕secs.	J. H. Hogshaw 4mins. 59⅕secs.	G. Waddell 19⅕secs.
Warwick	A. H. Dawkes 17ft. 10ins.	A. H. Dawkes 4ft. 8½ins.	A. H. Dawkes 11⅕secs.	E. W. Pyne 62⅕secs.	—	E. W. Pyne 5mins. 26⅕secs.	A. H. Dawkes 22⅕secs.
Wellingborough	G. T. Carter 21ft. 4ins.*	A. J. Walker 5ft. 4ins.*	S. T. Askham 11secs.	K. White 57⅗secs.	K. G. Fryer 2mins. 12⅕secs.*	K. G. Fryer 5mins. 0⅕sec.*	K. White 18⅕secs.
Westminster	M. A. Thompson 20ft. 2½ins.*	E. M. Plaskitt 5ft. 1½ins.	M. A. Thompson 11secs.	F. Besson 56⅕secs.	F. E. D. Hodges —	F. E. D. Hodges 5mins. 22⅕secs	E. M. Plaskitt 19⅕secs.
AT STAMFORD BRIDGE	W. Morris (Bury Grammar) 21ft. 1½ins.	A. W. Whitting ham (City of London) & A. J. Walker (Wellingborough 5ft. 3½ins.	F. I. D. Garforth (Rugby) 10⅕secs.	W. Morris (Bury Grammar) 52⅕secs.	H. C. Mackenzie (King's College School) 2mins. 7⅕secs.	S. Bessen (Westminster) 4mins. 42⅕secs.	L. N. Kindersley (Eton) 17⅕secs.

* Denotes a school record.

The Robber's Fortress.

By A. G. HOUBLON

Illustrated by George Soper

I

THE hot weather was just beginning, and the station was already very empty. In fact, the Mogulai Frontier contingent mess was able to muster only three members: the major commanding the cavalry squadron on detachment at Paratwada; Drake, his subaltern; and Barton, another subaltern in temporary command of the battery. The infantry regiment, which ought to have been at Paratwada, was somewhere on the North-West Frontier trying to catch Pathans. Also, the major was about to start away on shooting leave. Drake had just said that it would be beastly dull, and that he hoped the dakus would break out and give him some fun.

"All very well for you," growled Barton; "but where do I come in? The guns never get a look in now."

"You bloodthirsty young rip!" laughed the major. "You were in Tibet, weren't you? I thought so; and you've had a look in on the North-West Frontier. Two shows, and you've only four years' service. What more do you want?"

"Alla-ud-deen," replied Barton. "He's on the warpath, so I hear, though not near here."

Alla-ud-deen was a noted robber, a Rohilla by descent and an ex-duffadar of native cavalry. He was chief of a large and prosperous gang of dakus, or highway robbers, who possessed a refuge somewhere in the Central Indian Hills. The police could do nothing with him—he seemed to look upon them as a joke—and the two military expeditions which so far had tried to catch him had not seen so much as a hair of his horse's tail.

"If he does come near here, I hope he does it while I'm away," said the major, who had done a good deal of daku hunting, besides other fighting. "I'm getting too old for thief-catching."

"You'll have to be wired for, sir," said Drake, perhaps a thought regretfully, at which his commanding officer laughed.

"Don't let that worry you, sonny," he said. "I won't spoil your show. I shan't be anywhere near a telegraph office after I leave the Chor Pahar Bhil Station. I'm going with Ellis, of the Chor Paharies. But—bar humbug!—I shouldn't be surprised if you did have to go. Alla-ud-deen is certainly out. It's just a question of whether he goes on long enough."

I must now briefly explain the existence of the Mogulai Frontier contingent. It was raised a hundred or so years ago to police the still little-known belt of land south of the Central Indian Hills. In those days Alla-ud-deen's ancestors allowed no one to live peacefully, and every town and village of any size was walled and fortified as far as circumstances allowed of, to guard against their raids. The railway and telegraph have, to a large extent, abolished highway robbery; but it still continues, occasionally on a large scale, and certainly a year seldom passed without some unit of the force being out to deal with some band, like Alla-ud-deen's, which had got beyond civil police control.

For the rest, the force was ordinary native troops, four cavalry and six infantry regiments, and four batteries, which, besides daku hunting, had given good account of themselves in the Mutiny, in Burma, and on the Frontier. The batteries were a curious survival, being armed with bronze smooth-bores of the Mutiny

period, two six-pounder guns, and two twelve-pounder howitzers to each battery. But, old and out of date as they were, these guns shot well, and were quite sufficient for bush fighting and for mud walls and jungle forts which dated from before their own period. At one time they had a full share of whatever fun was going, but of late the services of the gunners were hardly ever required, hence Barton's special grievance.

The major duly went off on leave, and, after leaving the cantonment of the Bhil regiment, vanished into the wilderness. Meanwhile, vague reports began to reach civilisation of Alla-ud-deen's doings, how he would suddenly appear from the wild bush belt below the even wilder hills, loot a village of its best cattle, "persuade" the local Marwarie bunnias to reveal their secret stores of rupees, strip them of their jewels, and then vanish with his plunder into the hills. His band was said to number over a hundred, all well mounted and armed, yet once among the foothills the whole band disappeared, cattle and all, and were no more seen or heard of till the next raid.

The police could do nothing with him; but at last an enterprising native officer with a score of armed constables succeeded in intercepting him on his return from a raid. Every single man of them paid for his daring with his life. Alla-ud-deen did not believe in half-measures. But he had been better advised to have evaded them, as he could easily have done.

The Indian Government is very patient. So it took no violent action till the last possible moment—marked by the annihilation of the plucky but luckless police. Then it was decided that drastic measures must be taken, and it sent a cipher telegram to the commanding officer, Paratwada, to say so.

Barton, being three days senior to Drake, was O.C., and he received the telegram when sitting outside the mess after dinner. Neither of the boys associated it with Alla-ud-deen, although the yellow envelope proclaimed it as an urgent message.

"Hullo! What's that?" said Barton, as the messenger approached. "Return of worn-out bootlaces not received, expedite at once, I'll bet. Bearer, bring a lamp. Why can't they leave me alone. It's too hot—— Wow! It's from his Exaltedness, the Chief Commissioner, Mogulai Frontier Province—and it's in cipher!"

"They are all mad, the sahibs," said the messenger, as the two boys stampeded to the station staff office behind the mess-house to find the key to the cipher. "See! The commanding sahib has not signed my receipt, and I must wait."

"No, they are not mad," said the bearer, who had grown old in the service of the sahibs; "they are only young. They are good boys, Barton Sahib and Drake Sahib, and doubtless you have brought them good news."

There was no question about this, at least, as far as Drake was concerned. When deciphered the telegram ran as follows:—

O.C. Paratwada will detail necessary troops to destroy Alla-ud-deen and band, said to be a hundred strong and well armed, in Tarasgaon district. Full discretion of action allowed, but outrages must be stopped finally.

"In other words," said Drake, excitedly, "Alla-ud-deen has got to be wiped out. Oh my aunt! It's too good to be true. Now then, O.C., detail your troops and be quick about it. I must start to-night."

"No, you don't," said Barton. "Stop dancing like a peacock in a fit, and let's get the map out. This wants thinking out."

"Think away, Napoleon," said Drake. "Only be quick, and let me get off. I'll requisition your old pop-guns if I can."

"I'd take 'em out if I dared," said Barton, shaking his head, dolefully. "It says 'necessary troops,' but I'm afraid it wouldn't wash. Come along, and let's look at the map. I know Tarasgaon a bit. I was there last year."

They went into the ante-room and spread out the map.

"Do you see that river?" said Barton, marking its course with a pencil. "All between that and the hills is jungle, and practically uninhabited. On the south side it's cultivated, and that's where Alla-ud-deen goes to business."

"Then I'd better get into the bush and cut him off."

"That's it. But look here. You'd better take Jafir Khan, my orderly and shikari, as a guide. He knows the country. Otherwise you'll be hopelessly fogged. It's as wild as the middle of Africa, and there's no one in it except jungle men, who'll bolt directly they see you. But whatever you do, try to trail him into the hills. He's got a hiding-place there, and it's just possible it may be a place which'll mean a job for me."

"I will if I can, you bet. Now about starting. It's a moonlight night."

"Nix on that. What parade have you on for to-morrow?"

"Ordinary drill order."

"Well, send someone down for your ressaldar, or, better still, we'll send for ponies and ride down to the lines. Then tell him you'll have a surprise field service marching order, with full supply of ammunition, tents, provisions, and forage. Then go for a route march and don't come back. If you go out at night they'll know it in the bazaar; there are sure to be spies there, and they'll smell a rat. They won't suspect an ordinary parade, especially if you inspect everything without hustling, and don't get excited."

"I swear you're a great man, Barton," said Drake. "I'll remember you in my will.

They secured grindstones, and kept them busy till the squadron took the trail again.

But what about station orders? It'll have to go in, and someone will give it away."

"It won't go in till the job's done," said Barton, decisively. "Tarasgaon is only about fifty miles away. You ought to be there the day after to-morrow. I'll ride round casual-like in the morning and see you off, you lucky beggar!"

II

DRAKE'S men liked and trusted him; but their liking and confidence were tested to the utmost by an unexpected and unnecessarily elaborate route march at the beginning of the hot weather. They were puzzled also by the presence of Gunner Jafir Khan of the battery, in uniform and armed, and especially by his long conference with their O.C. But on halting for water and feed, six miles out of cantonments, all was explained. Drake called up his native officers, and told them what he was going to do.

"This is good news for the men, sahib," said Ressaldar Dilawur Khan, his senior native officer. "But are we not too many? Surely these low-born daku-folk will not fight when they see a whole squadron."

The old warrior did not believe in spoiling sport.

"They are many and well armed," said Drake. "A hundred at least; and Alla-ud-deen learnt how to fight in one of our regiments. Also, they are Rohillas, who usually fight well."

"They do, sahib," said Dilawur Khan, who knew it from personal experience. "Well, we must hope for the best." He handled his sabre affectionately. "Is there permission to tell the men?"

"There is," replied Drake. "I said nothing till now, for walls and trees have ears, and without doubt Alla-ud-deen had his spies in Paratwada."

"Very true, sahib," said Dilawur Khan, smiling. "I knew of two such in the bazaar. They are now in gaol."

"In gaol! What for?"

"Who knows, sahib? If there is anything to be proved against them they will stay. If not, they will be released when our work is done. By your favour, I guessed what was toward, and, thinking it best that these men should be in gaol, I spoke to Rashid-ud-deen, chief constable. He arranged it for me."

Drake stared. The unblushing illegality of the affair appalled his Western mind for just a moment. Then he saw the perfect common sense of his officer's action, and he chuckled with delight.

"Oh, well done, Dilawur Khan," he said. "Our work is well begun. Now tell the men."

The men, being natives, did not cheer. Instead, they reinspected their arms, and a small body went off to a neighbouring village and forcibly borrowed two grindstones, which they kept busy till the squadron took the trail again.

They marched till nightfall, with a two hours' halt during the heat of the day in a thick mango-grove, and when they finally bivouacked were over thirty miles on their way. They started again before daylight, now with orthodox flankers and advanced guard, and after the first halt Jafir Khan and two troopers rode on far ahead to scout. They were now close to Alla-ud-deen's latest hunting-ground, passing through country as wild as any in the world. Villages there were none, except here and there a few miserable grass huts belonging to three-parts-wild jungle men

On their left was the wall of hills, two thousand feet above the plains, while on their right the thick bush land sloped down to the river, beyond which the heat haze hid a few mud villages which formed the robbers' latest prey.

The nearest railway track was sixty or seventy miles away—Paratwada itself was forty miles from the railway—there was no telegraph nearer than the cantonment, and the only roads were mere tracks, inches deep in dust in the dry weather and impassable in the rains. Every inch of cultivated land had been wrung from the surrounding jungle, big herds of antelopes wandered everywhere over the fields by day, by night the deer and wild pig plundered them; the wolves and hyenas howled round the villages, and panthers stole goats and calves

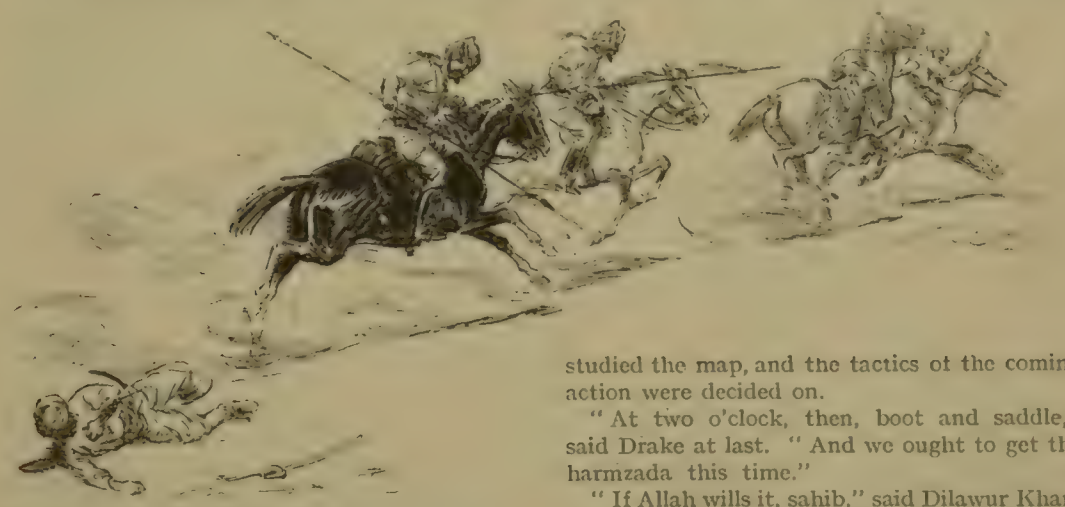
After salaam, inform honour (it ran), have seen daku army, resting in jungle near Chinigaon Ford, meaning to loot village two kos beyond river without doubt. Sowar Bishen Singh will guide.

Drake with an effort resisted an undignified desire to dance a war-dance. It seemed almost too good to be true. The outlaws could have heard nothing of his advance, and were at that moment waiting unconsciously to be attacked, only a few miles from him.

"How far is this ford?" he asked, trying to speak casually.

"Four kos, sahib."

"Let's see if it's on the map," said Drake, and took out the mess map, which he had borrowed contrary to all rule and custom. For a quarter of an hour or so he and his old ressaldar



One of the spies was thrust from his horse, and hard on the heels of the other rushed the cavalry sowars.

under the eyes of the watchers. Yet the rich soil well repaid those who worked it, and there was wealth in the unpretentious brown villages, or, rather, there had been till Alla-ud-deen and his band burst upon the district like a flight of locusts.

The squadron bivouacked again, having seen nothing more dangerous than a wild pig, and patrols of selected men were sent out. But nothing was heard or seen of the robbers till close on midnight, when one of Jafir Khan's companions came in with a scrawl on a scrap of paper. Drake could make nothing of it. He could read Hindustani, but Jafir Khan, practised scout and woodcraftsman though he was, was almost illiterate. However, Dilawur managed to make it out.

studied the map, and the tactics of the coming action were decided on.

"At two o'clock, then, boot and saddle," said Drake at last. "And we ought to get the harmzada this time."

"If Allah wills it, sahib," said Dilawur Khan. "At all events we should get some of them. For the rest the patrols must watch them, as wolves watch buck, to find their lair in the hills. Now, with your honour's permission, it were best to sleep. I will see that your honour is duly awakened for parade, myself."

III

The Central Indian Hills afforded a splendid refuge to Alla-ud-deen. As mountains go in India, they are insignificant, but they cover a great deal of land, are densely wooded, and afford endless hiding-places. To this day they are hardly known at all outside the beaten tracks, except to the few jungle-folk who inhabit them.

Alla-ud-deen found them invaluable. Unlike most modern Indian thieves, he did a large business in cattle, which was only possible thanks

to those hills. His methods were simplicity itself, almost similar to those of the cattle thief of Western America. He raided north, and after keeping his plunder in some secret place in the hills, he distributed them south, and quite likely stole them again.

At the very time that Drake and his horsemen were hard on his trail he was feeling particularly well pleased with life. He had been of late doing very well. The Tarasgaon district was virgin soil, its cattle were good and plentiful, there was much money hidden away, to be dug up under persuasion, and the Marwari bunnias' womenkind were well supplied with jewellery. But the district was nearly worked out, and Chinigaon, perhaps the richest of all, was the last village he intended to plunder.

Not a hitch had occurred anywhere. At daybreak the village was surrounded, and by sunrise the task of persuading was well under way in the village itself, while detachments outside were rounding up the best of the cattle. The organisation was perfect, thanks to the robber chief's military training. There were scouts all round the village, look-out men on the village tower, and patrols to prevent anyone escaping to give an alarm. Every man knew his work and did it. Alla-ud-deen saw to that. He liked to be able to give his undivided attention to a branch of his trade which he loved, that of persuading fat Marwaries to reveal their treasures.

He had just secured the results of one such investigation, and was laughing at the abusive language of three, now jewelless, Marwari women, whose arms were bound because they had tried to scratch his face—their men were locked up in a grain-bin—when the sentry outside the house reported an alarm. In a moment the outlaw was out of the house, and in the saddle and galloping towards the direction indicated by the look-out.

One glance was enough for him, once he was outside the walls. About half a mile away were two of his scouts, riding their hardest, and behind them four cavalry sowars driving their horses like men out pig-sticking. As Alla-ud-deen saw them one of the sowars got first spear, and the two horses went on with only one man.

The outlaw grasped the situation at once. There were only four sowars in sight, but he knew quite well that there must be many more behind. Some of his spies would have to explain this, he decided. But as the four were without support they must be attended to. That would not take a minute, and after that they must run for it. He spoke a word to his immediate escort, about a dozen strong, and with a yell the little band of robbers rode at the soldiers.

For once Alla-ud-deen's calculations were quite wrong. The robbers expected the sowars to run for it, when they would be easily accounted for. But the King's sowars had no idea whatever of turning their backs on mere dakus. On seeing the attack coming, one of them shouted something, the four closed knee to knee and rode in solid mass at the small mob of dakus. The action was brief but lively. The four trained soldiers went clean through the outlaws, wheeled and charged back, before the dakus had recovered from their surprise. This was too much altogether for the robbers. They broke and fled, while the soldiers wheeled again, and drew off at an easy canter, laughing and shouting insults at their discomfited opponents.

Alla-ud-deen laughed too. As an old soldier and cavalry man, he did not grudge the soldiers their triumph.

"*Bismillah!*" he said to his second in command, also an ex-soldier. "I shall in future make every man who wishes to join me serve his time in the *resala* first. To be a good daku a man must know his drill. Well, we must be gone before their comrades come. Blow the alarm, brother."

The alarm was blown, the robbers galloped in, and in a few moments the whole troop, except a few stragglers, was in flight. They had not started a moment too soon. They were scarcely clear of the village before more cavalrymen appeared from nowhere in particular, and began to gallop in pursuit.

Things looked bad for Alla-ud-deen for the next few minutes. To begin with, a boy with a smooth face under his turban arrived alone on a big, high-caste bay Arab, and began to use a long sword in a very unchildlike manner. By the time the scuttling thieves had realised that he had come alone—two of them were down by then—and so could be dealt with safely, he was joined by two score or so brown, black-bearded lancers, headed by a greybeard, whose sword was even more unpleasant.

Luckily for his men, Alla-ud-deen was a brave man, a gallant scoundrel, even though he was a scoundrel. He was well mounted, and could easily have escaped to the bush, now only half a mile away; but he was not the man to sacrifice his followers to save his own skin. He had about a dozen men whom he could trust to fight, as well as to plunder, old soldiers all, and shouting to them by name, he collected

them, and got them into some sort of formation. By this time the cavalrymen were well among the rest of his men, and a very pretty fight was going on, the robbers being driven and harried like sheep before wolves, though they outnumbered the soldiers by more than two to one. Then, to the surprise of the defenders of law and order, they were taken in flank by a compact and quite adequate little squad, which fought as well as they did themselves. For about a minute things looked serious. Two sowars went down and several were wounded. Alla-ud-deen forced his way to the smooth-faced leader, and actually crossed swords with him. The boy's shoulder chain saved him from a bad wound; but he got in a swinging return, which beat down the outlaw's guard, and, but for his turban, would have ended Alla-ud-deen's career there and then. Then the greybeard, Dilawur Khan, interfered, and the robber did the only thing possible: he bolted, followed by the remnant of his *corps d'élite*. Numbers and discipline had speedily proved too much for the gallant blackguards. But the short respite they had obtained gave the less warlike members of the gang the chance of reaching the jungle, where Alla-ud-deen and his men quickly followed them, and the fight ended a minute later on the fringe of the bush, beyond which pursuit was useless.

Barton got in a swinging blow which beat down the outlaw's guard.

"Now where are Jemardar Gurdit Singh and the rest of the men?" exclaimed Drake, angrily, when the excitement had died away. "They have failed us, Dilawur Khan; they have let those harmzadas escape."

"That would be unlike them, sahib," said the old war-dog, soothingly. "Your honour forgets that they had much farther to go than we had, and that those scouts discovered us, and gave the alarm too soon. Ah, listen, sahib!" he added, as shots began to ring out in the distance. "They were not so far off after all. We will get the dakus yet. By your permission we will ride on, Mashallah, sahib!" he went on, as they entered the jungle. "Those rogues, a few of them at least, fought well."

"They did, by Jove!" said Drake, brightening up at the recollection of the cheery fight he had enjoyed. "They made me anxious for a minute. Alla-ud-deen made a good charge; he is a brave man, even if he is a daku."

"That is true, sahib. It is a pleasure to have crossed swords with him. It is to be hoped he will die fighting, and not live to go to gaol. Your honour fought him well; but, sahib, it is useless to cut at the head. No man can cut through a good turban."

"I know it was idiotic of me," said Drake. "But he'd just got me a sickener on the shoulder. My armour saved me; but it's beastly sore."

"It is not on the sword arm, by the favour of Allah," said Dilawur Khan. "But, sahib, the firing continues. By your favour, the horses are now breathed. It were well to go more quickly."

The troop pressed on, and after a time found a squad from the other half-squadron, who gave Drake another disappointment. The other half-squadron had met the dakus, but scattered in the bush. They had accounted for a few; but concentrated action had been impossible, and the majority of them—including their redoubtable leader, had broken through and got away. The jemadar, with the rest of his command, and Jafir Khan, the tracker, had gone in pursuit

Drake went on the trail of the detachment; but saw no more of the dakus. About the middle of the afternoon he came up with his other half-squadron, under the jemadar, who had to report failure.

"It was useless, sahib," he said. "They scattered like a sounder of the pigs that they are; and the jungle being thick and much broken with nullahs, as your honour sees, they have escaped us, and are doubtless hidden in the hills."

"Well, we must rout them out," said Drake. "But we can't do any more to-day. The horses are done. We must look for water, and then camp. To-morrow we start searching the hills for that budmash."

IV

"SAHIB, a jungle man wishes to see your honour."

"What the dickens does he want? Has he any information to give?" said Drake, testily.

He had been scouring the hills for four days, and had so far neither seen nor heard anything of his quarry. After the manner of their kind, the jungle-folk were quite sure that they had never so much as heard of Alla-ud-deen, and were not very certain that they even knew what dakus were.

"He says he can guide your honour to the dakus' fort."

"Can he, by Jove! Then give my salaam to the Ressaldar Sahib and Jemadar Sahib, if they are in, and bring him in."

The two native officers were in camp, it happened; a durbar was assembled and the jungle man was brought before it. The man proved to be a Bhil, and, unlike most wild men, he did not appear to be greatly impressed, much less alarmed, by the presence of the armed sahib and his grim-looking companions. Also, as all three officers noticed at once, as he came before them he drew himself up, squared his shoulders, and half raised his hand, as if to salute. But almost immediately he sank into the usual slouch, and salaamed, half doubling himself up as he did so.

"You are no jungle Bhil," said Dilawur Khan. "You are a soldier, a deserter belike."

"Protector of the poor!" whined the Bhil.

"It is useless to tell us lies," said Drake. "We are soldiers, and we know one when we see him. But we will ask no questions if you can guide us to Alla-ud-deen. Where is his place?"

"Sahib, in the hills, half a day's march from here."

"That means a good day's march for us," remarked Drake. "Do you know the place? What is his stronghold like?"

"Sahib, it is a fortress. I know it well, and the way to it."

"How, a fortress—is it built of mud or stone?"

"Of stone, sahib. A mighty *kila*, built aforetime by devils, for the Shatrya rajahs who are gone. Now it and the valley in which it stands are inhabited by ghosts and none dare go there, save Alla-ud-deen, who—being a devil and chief of devils—fears nothing."

"This is fool's talk," said Drake. "If there were such a castle in these hills men would have spoken of it before."

"Sahib," said Jemadar Gurdit Singh, who was a Rajput, or Shatrya, "this is no lie. I have heard speak of such a castle, lost in these hills. It may well be that it is Alla-ud-deen's refuge."

"Well, we'll soon find out," said Drake. "Take him away."

He conferred in low tones with his officers, and after a few minutes the Bhil was recalled.

"Listen, thou," said Drake. "Thou shalt guide us to this ghost castle. But be sure of this—if thou play us false thou wilt shortly become a ghost thyself."

The man smiled.

"I have no fear, sahib," he said. "I do not play false."

"That we shall see. Go now. In an hour we start. Till then thou art in charge of the guard. Dilawur Khan," he added, as the man was led away, "if there is a fort, as he says, we shall need guns. Choose me a man with a good horse to ride in for me to Barton Sahib. Good old Barton," added Drake to himself in English. "He'll get his look in after all. He'll stand on his head for pure joy when he gets my note."

Within an hour the squadron was on the march, in single file, along a goat-track pointed out by the Bhil. All day long they went along at a foot's pace winding in and out of the wild hills, along a track which seemed to lead to nowhere, but as the air was fairly cool on the upper slopes the ride was comfortable enough. But during the afternoon he took them down to the edge of a deep valley, one flank of which was a sheer basalt cliff, while the other was the ordinary rock-strewn khud, but so steep as to be practically unclimbable. There seemed no way down, but the Bhil at once started down the slope.

"Look here," said Drake. "Are we to go down there?"

"By your favour, sahib," replied the man.

"Then we shall have to dismount, I suppose."

"Nay, sahib. If your honour will follow me, I will show a way by which a horseman may ride down."

"I believe you're one of the gang," muttered Drake. "Anyhow, lead on."

The Bhil was as good as his word. Either he knew the trail very well, or else he had a wonderful eye for ground, for by zigzagging and doubling among the rocks and jungle he led the whole squadron safely down. All the way, however, he walked with his head bowed, and every now and then he halted the squadron, and quartered the ground, like a hound, for a little way, before proceeding.

When they were half-way down Drake suddenly understood his manœuvres. They were descending a steep place to an almost level sandy tract, when he noticed something on the sand. To the surprise of the Bhil, he halted the column, and looked keenly at the sand. Then he started again, and when they reached the level turned to his officers.

"This man is no liar," he said. "Many horsemen have crossed this sand before us. It is sheltered from the wind, so some marks remain, though the pig and deer have been over it since."

Drake was right. The Bhil was following the outlaws by their own stale trail. Like all wild men, bushmen or Australian blacks, he could read the trail, when to any other man there would have been not the faintest indication of a mark.

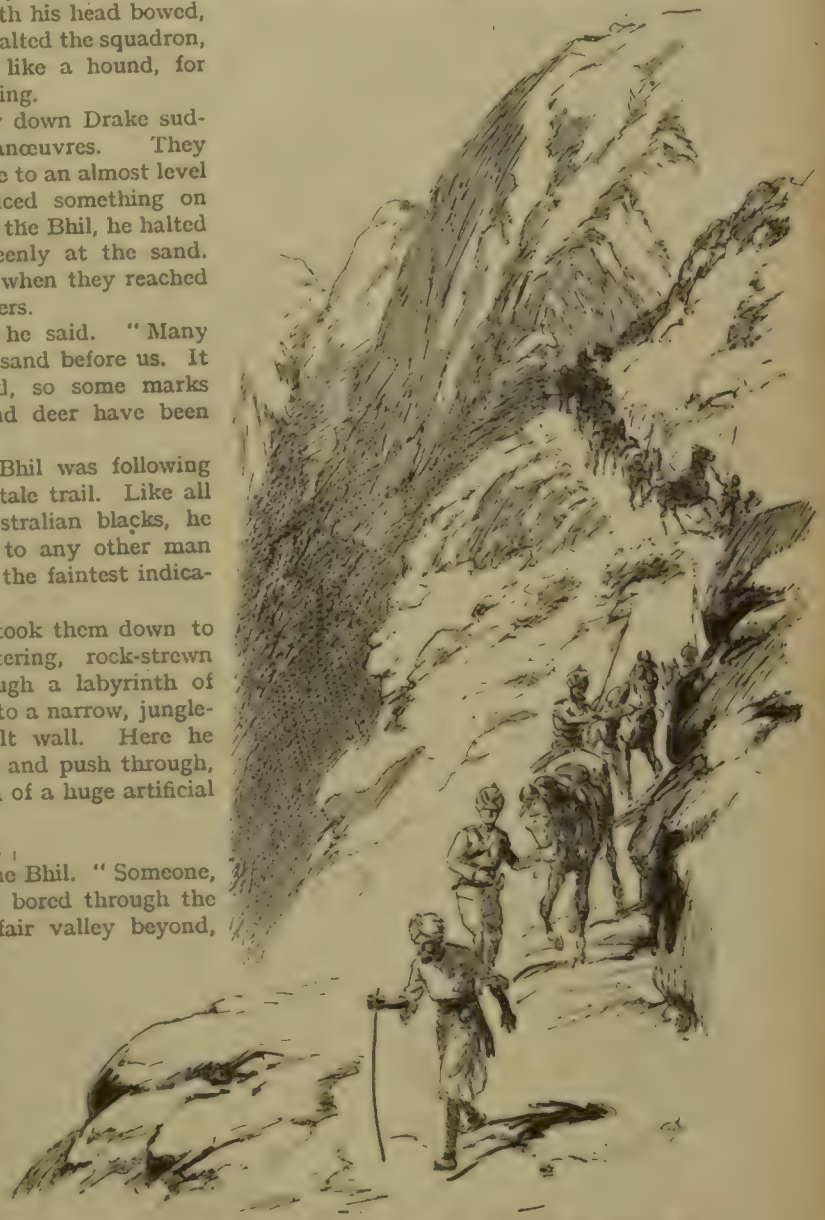
Without failing once he took them down to the bottom of the sweltering, rock-strewn valley, and then on, through a labyrinth of lesser valleys, till he came to a narrow, jungle-choked gorge in the basalt wall. Here he made them part the jungle and push through, till they came to the mouth of a huge artificial tunnel in the basalt.

"In here?" said Drake.

"Even so, sahib," said the Bhil. "Someone, doubtless helped by devils, bored through the mountain, and finding a fair valley beyond, built a castle there, where now Alla-ud-deen, the thief, sits where once kings had ruled. But it were well to go on foot here."

This seemed good advice, so, accompanied by Dilawur Khan and two troopers, Drake went into the tunnel. Contrary to his expectations, it was perfectly smooth going, but otherwise the most unpleasant way imaginable, being full of bats. But at last it came to an end, and they looked out into a beautiful, round, crater-like valley, four miles or more across, in the centre of which, perched on a low hill, was a strong-looking stone Rajput castle.

No watch had been set on the tunnel mouth, and the squadron was got through without mishap, and camped in a convenient valley, out



The Bhil, with his eyes fixed on the ground, led them down the steep and tortuous track.

of sight of the castle. Then Drake, the ressaldar, and a small patrol started round the inside of the rock wall to reconnoitre. There was no question about the use to which the valley had been put. On the downland near the castle were a quantity of cattle and buffaloes grazing, while they could see men lounging about near the place. But no one came near them till they were almost opposite the tunnel, when they saw a solitary horseman riding slowly towards them. He had not seen them, and, reining back under cover of some trees, they watched him through their glasses. Suddenly Drake gaze a cry of surprise.

"Ressaldar Sahib!" he exclaimed. "Has the sun struck me? Or is that Barton Sahib?"

"It is Barton Sahib wearing a turban," replied Dilawur Khan. "Ah! And there, just come from behind that rock, is Jubber Singh, his subadar."

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Drake.

He cantered up to Barton, and greeted him, and his greeting was as follows:—

"How the dickens did you get here?"

"Hullo, Drake," said Barton, quite unmoved. "Why, you sent for me, and the man guided me to a beastly tube railway sort of place over there," he nodded back over his shoulder. "Frightful job we had to get the guns down to it, but we did it. But why did you send a Bhil instead of a sowar?"

"I did send a sowar," said Drake, "but he only started this morning, and he couldn't have guided you here, as he didn't know the way. But, I say, how did the message come?"

"One of your visiting-cards with a scrawl on it; here it is. I got it three days ago."

Drake took the card. It was certainly his own, and on it was a scrawl in indelible pencil which dimly suggested his schoolboy's hand.

Bring guns (it read). Bearer will guide. Urgent.—D

"I'm jolly glad you're here," said Drake, "as we can get busy at once. But I never sent that card."

"The dickens you didn't!"

"No; but it doesn't matter now. The thing is that you are here; otherwise I should have had to wait for days. By the way, where's your Bhil? Was he a soldier, by any chance? A soldier Bhil turned up early this morning and guided me here."

"By Jove! that's rum," said Barton. "We couldn't get anything out of the beggar; but he was a soldier sure enough. Let's have him up. Where is he, Jubber Singh?" he added to his native officer.

But the Bhil was nowhere to be found, and when later on Drake wanted his guide he also was missing.

"Well, it doesn't matter," said Barton. "We'll inquire afterwards. It's too late to get into action to-night; but we can reconnoitre, and give them a surprise to-morrow morning."

The two boys and their native officers carefully reconnoitred the fortress, and later, when the moon rose, moved into position for the miniature siege. The two tunnels were barricaded and manned with a few sowars with carbines, and the remainder got into position behind a fold of the land, half a mile from the fortress. Then, at daylight, the cavalry moved out and surrounded the fortress.

Everything had been quiet till then. The dakus were not early risers. But as soon as the horsemen appeared on the pastures men appeared on the battlements, running to and fro, and a loud clamour arose. Then a few shots were fired, till Barton, in command, raised a white flag; when the firing ceased, and presently the robbers also raised a white flag.

"Might be a bally general!" chuckled Drake, as he saw the flag. "All the courtesies of war. Well, O.C.," he added to Barton, "you must go and ask him to surrender. But I hope he won't."

"So do I. I don't see why you should have all the fun," said Barton. "Well, here goes."

He rode up to the walls, with a proper escort and flag-bearer, very splendid, on a great black horse, in clean khaki, with glistening appointments, his head covered with a blue and gold turban instead of a hat. He had already two campaigns to his credit; but war and fighting were still a game to him, and he was enjoying himself immensely. Alla-ud-deen was not in the least pleased to see him. He was caught in a corner, and knew it, and after the manner of his kind tried to get a little of his own back by rude language.

"Hullo, child!" he said, jeeringly from the wall. "What—a new baby? I thought you were the one who spoilt my turban, at first. Has the government no men that it sends children to lead its troops? Go home quick to your mother's lap, baby, before you get hurt."

But Barton was in no way perturbed. Without heat or haste, he ordered Alla-ud-deen to surrender, with the option of being made to, or take the consequences.

"Ho, ho!" said Alla-ud-deen. "The little game-cock crows loudly. Go home and let your

feathers grow, chicken, and then come and talk to men. If you want me, you must take me thus." As he spoke he drew his sword and shook it at Barton.

But when the four guns were run up to the brow of a hillock opposite the gate a cry of consternation arose. They had not bargained for guns. However, they met the situation as best they could with two ancient brass pieces, which had survived the ravages of time, and were still moderately serviceable. As Barton opened fire they did so also, and one shot hurtled over the battery, while another pitched alongside of it.

"Hurrah!" said Barton. "Alla-ud-deen is a trump. Plays the game like a book. Jubber Singh, we must silence their guns first."

This did not take very long. The native of India, especially when trained by the Royal Regiment, is second to none as a gunner even with pre-mutiny smooth bores. As a matter of fact, those old bronze guns shoot with extraordinary accuracy, as Alla-ud-deen's gunners found to their cost. In less than five minutes the old brass guns were dismounted by direct hits with round shot, and Barton was free to attend to making a breach, through which the dismounted troopers could attack. This afforded a fresh surprise for both besieged and besiegers. After a few minutes concentrated fire the gate-house wall came down like a child's castle of bricks. As in the case of so many Indian castles the old fortress was jerry built, with formidable-looking wall casings filled with the merest rubbish. The original builder, feeling secure in his valley, had not thought it necessary to provide more than an appearance of strength.

All this time the robbers had kept up a heavy, though not accurate, fire, but when their stronghold was breached the fire died away, every head vanished from the battlements, and presently a rattle and clatter arose in some inner court.

"Case-shot — load!" shouted Barton. "Spare numbers, get the carbines and load!"

"Stand to your horses! Prepare to mount! Mount!" cried Drake.

Both boys quite understood the signs, and in a few minutes saw the fulfilment. An inner gate was thrown open, and a mob of horsemen poured out, screaming mad with bhang. They were no longer mere robbers; they were Rohilla, Rajput, or Mahratta warriors, cornered and doomed, but prepared to die sword in hand as their ancestors had done again and again.

The last phase was played out all over the valley. The battery had their share at the outset; but when the battle swayed away from them Barton mounted his horse and rode with Drake—to lose none of the fun, as he described it. In an hour's time all was over, and the troops came back to the castle to take stock of things, and refresh. Barton—who, having a field battery, had special facilities of transport—produced a well-stocked luncheon basket, and sat down to enjoy himself with his friend.

The outlaw laughed in scorn as Barton rode up and ordered him to surrender.

"Hullo, boys! Had a good time?"

Both started up and looked round. Behind them, in his shikar clothes, but armed with a revolver as well as with a rifle and hunting-knife, stood the major. Behind him again was another Englishman, Ellis, of the Chor-Pahari Bhil Corps, as it turned out, and also two soldierly looking Bhils whose faces were familiar,

and who grinned happily as if enjoying some very special joke.

"Don't look so startled," went on the major, smiling. "You might offer us a drink."

"Were you there all the time, sir?" said Drake, as he complied.

"I was, sonny, an interested looker-on," replied the major. "On that hill over there. I must say you boys did the job very cleanly."

"But how did you get here, sir?" queried Drake.

"And did you send those Bhils, sir?" joined in Barton. "You must have, I suppose."

"Guilty," replied the major. "I made a mystery of it all, and tried to forge Drake's hieroglyphics on a card I happened to have, because I didn't want you boys to know I was here. I wanted you to do the job yourselves. The card was one of a lot I left for you at Daulatabad, Drake."

"Oh, I remember," said Drake. "I say, it was awfully good of you. But how did you get here, sir?"

"As I told you, I went first to see the Chor-Pahari Bhils, and pick up Ellis. They lent me some men, those I sent you. We came on this valley by accident when we were after bison, and later I saw Alla-ud-deen ride in. I thought you'd like to pay him a visit, Drake, and knew you'd want the guns, so I sent that forged chit to Barton, and gave him the look in he wanted so badly. Hullo! What's that?"

As he spoke, four troopers appeared, carrying a rough-covered stretcher, on which lay a long, curved cavalry sabre.

"That?"

The two boys stood up and saluted the stretcher.

"It's Alla-ud-deen, sir," said Drake. "I know he was a daku and a general budmash. But he was a brave man, and fought well. I'm jolly glad we didn't take him alive to be hanged. We're going to bury him in front of his castle with his sword."

The major looked in silence at the two smooth-faced, armed youngsters beside him.

"Good boys!" he murmured. "Good boys."

THE END.

COMPETITIONS FOR JUNE

A Bicycle, a Camera, a Cricket Bat, and Other Fine Prizes for Our Readers

No. 1.—OUR BICYCLE COMPETITION

Which do you consider the best six advertisements in this month's CAPTAIN? A splendid bicycle may be yours if you prove to be a good judge; a camera, a cricket bat, and many consolation prizes are also offered. For full details of this competition see the special announcement in the Captain Club pages (page xii) at the end of this number, and read what the Old Fag has to say about it in his Editorial.

No. 2.—WORDS WANTED

Below, we print a paragraph from which a number of words have been omitted. How many of the missing words can you supply? Wherever a word has been left out a row of dots appear, so that there are eighteen missing words altogether. When you have decided what they are, write them down in the correct order, and send them to us, taking care to observe the following rules and conditions:—

Your attempt must be accompanied by the competition coupon to be found on the Prizes Page. Your name, address, and age must be written on the paper bearing your solution; which must be received not later than Saturday, June 20th, addressed "Words Wanted," Competition Editor, THE CAPTAIN, 8, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. Competitors will be divided into two classes, comprising those of sixteen years and over and those under sixteen respectively. The Editor's decision must be accepted as final, and, in the event of a tie, neatness and age may be taken into consideration, or the value of the prizes divided at the Editor's discretion. Here is the paragraph —

As the . . . slid . . a cloud. Vickers prepared for the riskiest . . . of his journey. The quad was in complete . . . but every moment he . . . that a light would start up in one of the . . . and a . . . call him by name. Though he . . . rubber-soled shoes his footfalls . . . in his ears, and it seemed to him that they must . . . be heard by . . . master in the school. But no lights shone . . and no . . . hailed him, and he took a . . . breath of . . . as he reached the . . . and his foot found the ancient . . . used for years by . . . bounds-breaking juniors.

FIRST PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: Goods to the value of Half a Guinea.

CONSOLATION PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED IN EACH COMPETITION

Public School Rowing

By C. E. THOMAS

IT has been my privilege to follow the grand sport of amateur rowing pretty closely throughout many Thames seasons, and to see the varying fortunes of English crews in good times and bad. I have heard the wail of the pessimist at Henley when a foreign crew has beaten England in the "Grand," and joined in the cheers when a home crew has taken full revenge for a temporary set-back. When one looks through past records, and notes how numerous have been the attacks on our chief rowing trophies, it is very gratifying to find how few invasions have been successful, and how well the high standard of English oarsmanship has been maintained in these days of many pastimes, tempting men to give up their rowing for something "softer."

In rowing of the Henley class we get the highest form of amateurism in sport, and it should be the ambition of every rowing school to do its level best to keep the English rowing flag flying. It is to these schools that the Universities and the clubs must look for the majority of their recruits; and, even those schools whose ambitions never rise above the giddy heights of a fixed-seat four are doing sterling work for the game, for here is the true foundation of rowing; neglected, sad to say, by many clubs who, by force of circumstances, seem obliged to put novices on slides before they have learned the elements of rowing.

The most remarkable sign of the present enthusiasm of rowing schools was the entry of five eights for the Ladies' Plate at Henley last year. Eton, often the winners, and Radley, pluckily keeping up their tradition of entering every year, we, of course, expect to see in the race; but in 1913 Shrewsbury, Beaumont, and Bedford also started. Unfortunately, the luck of the draw did not bring any two schools together, and some of the college crews were distinctly "hot." A splendid race was the first heat between Shrewsbury and St. John's College, Oxford, the school leading for a mile, but losing their advantage in the last 550yds., and being defeated by a canvas only. Radley were beaten by Christ Church, Oxford; Beaumont by Trinity College, Oxford; and Bedford by First Trinity, Cambridge, in successive heats. Then Eton defeated St. John's, but were beaten by three-quarters of a length by the conquerors of Bedford; and First Trinity then won the final from Trinity College, Oxford.

The presence of so many school crews gave special interest to the race, and the enthusiasm which led to their entries seemed to suggest that there should be a special school race for eights included in the Henley programme. Now that the regatta extends over four days there would be ample time for such an event, and it would undoubtedly do a lot of good to rowing. The class in the "Ladies'," with the best college crews so often competing, is so high that competition therein taxes the ordinary school crew very severely. But the Henley Regatta stewards are not given to making changes, so, possibly for some time, it will be necessary for schools who wish to row at the chief regatta of the year to go on steadily plugging away in the race for the Ladies' Plate. May they do so, and may the draw another time bring some of the schools together in preliminary heats! It is, presumably, too much to ask for the school crews—should they continue to enter as freely as last year—to be grouped in the draw.

In the '70's the Henley stewards evidently considered that they were not doing sufficient to encourage public school rowing by admitting the boat clubs of the schools to two special races, the "Ladies'" and the "Visitors'"—the latter for coxswainless fours—in which they had to meet college crews. So in 1879 they instituted a new race, the "Public Schools

Challenge Cup," which remained a feature of the regatta until 1884, the winners being:—

1879.....	Cheltenham
1880–1881.....	Bedford Grammar School
1882.....	Magdalen College School
1883.....	Hereford
1884.....	Derby

The success of the race is proved by the fact that in its last year it attracted eight crews,

J. V. A. Simpson, rowing captain of Bedford Modern School.

and there were never fewer than four. "The congestion of the Henley programme, then limited to two days' racing" is given by the *Field* as the reason for omitting the race in 1885; but it seems probable that an idea to have at Henley only first-class rowing had something to do with it, so the useful fixed-seat race had to go. The Henley stewards did not wipe out the event altogether, but transferred the trophy to Marlow Regatta, which then took place on the day after Henley. Here at different times Bedford Modern, London International College, St. Paul's, Christ's Hospital, Magdalen College School, and St. Edward's (Oxford) competed, and Bedford Modern won in every year the cup was raced for from 1885 to 1891. Marlow had to change its date to August, an unsuitable time for a school event, and the Public Schools Cup race was abandoned.

This was a great mistake, and I cannot help thinking that when Marlow gave up the race the Henley stewards, or some other responsible committee, should have taken the matter in hand, and arranged for the cup to be rowed for somewhere every year.

During the last few seasons the only direct encouragement to public school rowing on the Thames outside the Henley races has been given by the race for THE CAPTAIN Cup for sliding-seat fours in clinker boats, which has been decided at Molesey Regatta, the meeting which, of the Thames fixtures, is next in importance to Henley. Instituted in 1910, in that year King's School, Worcester, beat Beaumont College; in 1911 Kingston Grammar School won, defeating Westminster; and in 1912 there was a capital entry of five crews, Kingston G. S., Tiffin's (Kingston), Beaumont, Westminster, and the Imperial Service College; the final was a very close race, Beaumont beating the Imperial Service crew by three feet only. Last year, entries fell to two crews again, and Imperial Service College beat Kingston Grammar School.

Such, in brief, is the history of public school cup racing on the Thames; but this year there is an interesting development in the restoration of the old Henley-Marlow trophy event to the Marlow programme. This has come about through the Marlow Committee making the experiment last year of holding a regatta before Henley with so much success that they are not likely to return to the August date. This year's regatta is on June 20th; and, as this period is convenient for school rowing, the

F. L. C. Hodson, Captain of Boats, Cheltenham College.

committee have very wisely decided to restore the Public Schools Cup (still for fixed-seat fours) to the programme. Incidentally, it should be mentioned that this decision was come to early last year, a fact unknown to a well-known rowing coach who provisionally arranged a

similar event at Walton. Naturally, when the Marlow decision was known, the Walton scheme was dropped, and there seems every possibility of a successful entry of fixed-seat crews.

There is one point, however, in connection with the Walton idea which should be mentioned. I have seen the following quotation from a letter sent to the rowing schools: "There is already a race for a school cup at Molesey, but for several reasons it is not a success. To begin with, Henley schools are barred, so the event becomes, *ipso facto*, a race for inferiors. Secondly, the race is on slides. Now, if a boys' crew is good enough to race on slides, they should go to Henley; if not good enough for Henley, they should concentrate on fixed-seat rowing." I think it should be very clearly pointed out to possible competitors for THE CAPTAIN Cup that Henley schools (which presumably means any schools competing at Henley) are not barred. The remainder of the quotation expresses an opinion with which I, for one, cannot agree. It seems to me that there is a very wide margin between being good enough to race on slides and being good enough for the Ladies' Plate at Henley. The former implies a sufficient standard of merit to meet, say, a metropolitan or up-river club junior crew on equal terms, and surely a school crew is not doing anything very wrong by competing at, say, a local regatta. I should be sorry to think that there was anything detrimental to Beaumont's rowing in their winning the Junior Eights at Staines two years ago. This race, in fact, and possibly also their win in THE CAPTAIN Cup in 1912, must have influenced the college to enter for the Ladies' last year at Henley.

My own opinion is that rowing generally will benefit largely by gradations in public school races, and the two four-oared races for Public School Challenge Cups seem to be excellently arranged for bringing men on. Marlow is on June 20th, and Molesey on July 18th. The month between them should be ample time to work even crews who have done nothing but fixed-seat work into sliding-seat crews. I do not say that perfect form will be attained in the time, but it should be at least up to the standard of that of the junior club crews seen at Molesey and other Thames regattas. May I commend the experiment to such of the competitors at Marlow who are not bound entirely to fixed-seat work; and also ask rowing schools generally to do their best to put on crews for THE CAPTAIN race at Molesey.

I hope I may not be considered wearisome for having gone rather extensively into details of recent happenings regarding the public racing of school boat clubs, but the Henley entries, followed by the revival of the fixed-seat public school race, form, to my mind, as an unprejudiced looker-on, an important sign of the times. It seems to me that there is a tendency among the rowing schools to break away from the traditions which kept their doings mainly to private matches, with in the case of Eton and Radley a regular, and with other schools an occasional, visit to Henley. Such a move should produce good entries every year for both of the Public Schools Challenge Cup races, and may probably lead to more appearances at regattas generally. This applies particularly to the Thames. On some other rivers school crews play their part well in local regattas—Bedford and Durham for example; and there is no reason why more Thames school crews should not follow the example of the "provincial" section. Such a move would undoubtedly be for the good of rowing.

Magdalen College School Four.
Standing: B. R. Beasley (bow), Mr. B. H. Blackwell (coach), J. C. Callender (2).
Sitting: V. A. V. Jessel (3), (captain), J. D. Elliott (cox), W. M. Millard (stroke).

And now for a few notes on recent happenings among the school clubs, and the prospects of school crews. Several captains have favoured this magazine with particulars about their clubs, and these I have summarised.

St. Edward's School, Oxford, confines its work to fixed-seat rowing, as the number of men available is small. R. N. Dixey is captain

of boats, and hopes to have a crew at Marlow, which allows crews that usually meet annually to be drawn together. It is expected they will meet King's School, Worcester, who, by the way, won THE CAPTAIN Cup in its first year. Owing to the Marlow race it was intended to substitute trial fours for the usual eight-oared race against the Old Boys, so as not to interfere with the practice for the public event. This is good from Marlow's point of view, but seems a little rough on the Old Boys, and I hope the Present and Past race will not be allowed to lapse altogether.

St. Peter's School, York, First Four, 1914.
S. C. West (bow), H. S. O. Johnson (2), H. Richardson (3), S. B. E. Reynolds (stroke), A. Metcalf (cox), Mr. A. Milner (St. Catherine's, Cambridge) (coach).

At Bedford Modern School, the prospects were quite up to the average at the beginning of the season, although only half of last year's three crews remained. The only first colour left was the captain, J. V. A. Simpson; the second colours left being W. S. Christie and J. A. TenBroeke; and the third colours W. R. Wheeler, H. F. Davies, and W. J. W. Dunstall. The boat will probably consist of the three senior colours, and one of last year's third four. All the remaining men are heavy, and the average is expected to be 11st.—heavier than in recent years. This should be a considerable advantage to the crew. Good form was shown in the House Fours early in the year, and there is no reason why this year's crew, if not impeded by any "crocking," should not give a very good account of themselves.

At Cheltenham College, the rowing is undertaken under considerable difficulties, the chief handicap being the distance between the college and the river. The members of the boat club have to go nine miles by train three times a week to do their work on the Severn, and the expense keeps the numbers to between seventy and eighty, and nobody can row and play cricket as well. There is, however, great keenness over the rowing, and the college boat is well coached by Mr. H. W. T. Reed, late of First Trinity, Cambridge, and a member of the Leander Club. In the 1913 season, Cheltenham defeated scratch fours from New College and B.N.C., Oxford, but were beaten by St. Paul's School. All of last year's boat have left, but the new crew started practice in March, and promise to be lively, although not so heavy as last year's, the average being a little over 11st. —very nearly a stone lighter per man than the 1913 crew.

Durham School are good supporters of northern regattas, and should do well this season. There are left from last year's first crew H. G. H. Marshall, and all the third crew (who won the Mayor's Plate at Durham Regatta) as well as two members of the fourth crew (who won the Maiden Fours at Berwick). The captain is B. H. Richardson, and he and Marshall should be the leading oarsmen of the school. The crews should be well up to the average, and above the average of recent years in weight. The probable composition of the first crew is C. J. Rowland (bow), H. G. H. Marshall, H. K. Temperley or D. Armstrong, B. H. Richardson (stroke).

Victor Jessel is the captain of rowing at Magdalen College School, Oxford. Two races were rowed early this year against King's School, Worcester; the first four won by 4ft., and the second somewhat easily by six or seven lengths. The crews were: First four: B. R. Beasley (bow), J. C. Callender, V. A. V. Jessel, W.H. Millard (stroke), J. O. Elliott (cox); second four: G. T. Palin, J. L. Barratt, C. Bear, F. R. Beasley (stroke), A. Searby (cox). The first four may possibly compete at Marlow.

B. H. Richardson, Captain of Rowing, Durham School.

Abingdon School had at the beginning of this season three old colours, H. A. L. Donkin (last and this year's bow and captain), F. W. Lupton (three), and A. Davenport (stroke), as well as the coxswain A. Ellis. A. Eason of the second crew, J. N. Sanders (cox), and D. Cullen, one of the reserves, were also available. It was easy to settle the order of the first crew, owing to Eason's good form at the regatta last year, as follows: H. A. L. Donkin (bow) 9st. 5lbs., A. Davenport, 11st. 3½lbs., F. W. Lupton, 11st. 9lbs., A. Eason (stroke) 11st. 1½lbs., A. Ellis (cox) 6st. 1½lbs. Illness interfered with the crew's work for the match with Monkton Combe at Saltford on February 28th, and they were beaten by five lengths; but on the following Wednesday they beat the Old Boys, and on March 7th beat a scratch crew from Trinity College, Oxford. The second crew—E. L. Parry, J. Knowles, F. F. G. Race, D. Cullen (stroke), J. N. Sanders (cox)—were quite light, and lost both their races, against Monkton Combe II. and Old Abingdonians II. Mr. S. H. Baker, the coach of the first four, considers the crew the best of recent years, and with Eason, Davenport, Cullen, Race, and Parry, and the two reserves, Tinegate and Elford, available, next season prospects are good.

A. Maurice Broad is the captain of rowing at St. Paul's School, and the prospects are very bright. The school only goes in for fixed-seat rowing, and last year they won all their races, beating Winchester, Cheltenham, Tonbridge, and King's School, Canterbury; while the second crew defeated Beaumont II. and Tonbridge II. Four of last year's first colours are available this year, G. H. Gadsden (hon. secretary), A. M. Broad, W. P. Harwood, and A. G. P. Johnson (coxswain); and two of last year's second colours, C. I. N. Lambert and T. G. N. Jones, while there is plenty of good material from which to fill vacancies.

M. J. B. Howell writes that the prospects at Radley are fairly bright. There are five members of last year's crew available, and there is likely to be keen competition for seats in the boat. The river was in flood early in the year, and consequently the trial eight crews could only get out for a week, so the race was abandoned. The eight went out for the last few days of term, and did not shape badly; it should be heavier than the Radley crews of recent years. It is hoped that the change of the school game during the winter from Soccer to Rugger will give the wet-bobs more exercise, and benefit the rowing.

CONDITIONS OF THE RACE FOR "THE CAPTAIN" CUP.

(1) *The race is to be rowed in sliding clinker fours, and may be contested by a crew from any public school in the kingdom.*

(2) *Schools may bring their own boats, or, if preferred, one will be provided for them at Molesey.*

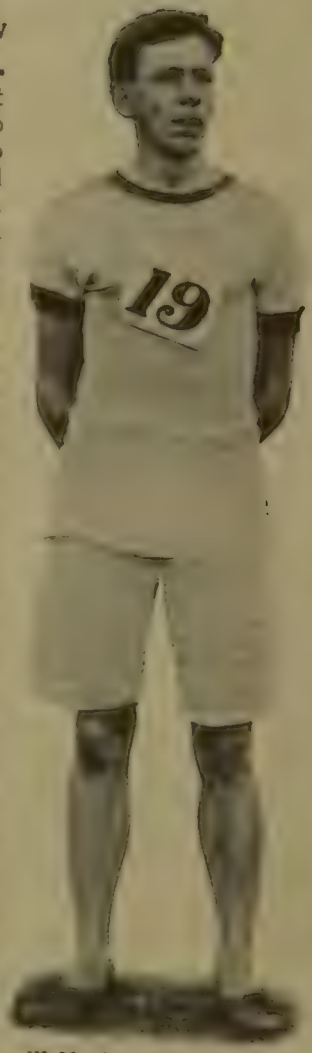
(3) *Entries should be sent to Mr. C. W. Kent, Fairhurst, East Molesey, as soon as possible, and not later than Wednesday, July 8th.*

(4) *If preliminary heats are necessitated by the number of entries these may, at the discretion of the Committee, be rowed off on the afternoon of Friday, July 17th. The course is about three-quarters of a mile in length.*

(Information from other rowing schools, arriving as we go to press, will be published next month.)

SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND, LONDON

Our Bicycle Competition.—If you have not already done so, I want you to turn at once to the Captain Club pages, and read there the full particulars of the competition in which we are offering a bicycle, a camera, and a cricket bat as first, second, and third prizes respectively. It is a contest which will appeal to you, I am sure, and as we have purposely chosen an early date as the final one on which coupons can be received here, in order that the winning competitors may receive their prizes while summer is still with us, there is no time for you to lose in starting on your task. This task, though a light one, as all summer tasks should be, is nevertheless one which will require you to exercise all your faculties of judgment, and you will find that to appraise the best six advertisements in their order of merit is not quite the simple, got-it-first-time effort that on first sight it may appear. In the last few years great strides have been made in the art of advertising, and effective display has been brought to such a pitch of excellence by many firms, and the methods of drawing attention have become so diversified, that one has to think twice before deciding which particular advert. scores more heavily than another. I would like to remind competitors that space is not everything; a half-page advertisement may be drawn up so effectively that its power of attraction is quite as great as that of an "ad." which occupies a full page, while in like manner a quarter-page might take precedence of a half-page. What you are asked to do is to decide which six advertisements in this number strike you as being most successful in compelling your notice.



W. Morris, of Bury Grammar School, who broke the record for the long jump at Stamford Bridge with a leap of 21ft. 1½ins., and also won the quarter-mile in 52⅘secs.

I can enter into no correspondence regarding this competition; the rules are perfectly simple and straightforward. As is our custom in the many similar competitions we have had, we shall discover from the votes of the competitors themselves which are the best six advertisements in this number, and the Captainite whose list corresponds most nearly to the correct one will be awarded the bicycle. In the very unlikely event of a tie the competitors' age may be taken into account. I would impress upon all Captainites the necessity of strictly adhering to the rules; it is surprising how often a competitor renders his entry void by neglecting an obvious and important condition. Don't forget that Saturday, June 20th, is the closing date; the earlier you forward us your entry the more you will help us in the heavy work of judging the competition.

I was very glad to see that the Public Schools Meeting at Stamford Bridge was very much better supported this year than has hitherto been the case. Eton, Rugby, Westminster, Charterhouse, Radley, Alleyn's, Abingdon, Taunton, Bury Grammar, City of London, King's College, Wellingborough, Epsom, Latymer Upper, Queen Elizabeth's, Barnet, Denstone, Wilson's Grammar, Emanuel, St. Bees, Merchant Taylors, Tiffin's, and Bedford all sent representatives, and some very fine sport was seen. Thanks to W. Morris, Bury Grammar School, with two firsts and two seconds, carried off the school cup. Morris, who I understand goes up to Cambridge in the autumn, covered himself with glory by beating record in the long-jump with a leap of 21ft. 1¼ins.; he might also have beaten record in the quarter-mile but for the fact that he won with such ease that he had no occasion to go "all out." Other fine performances were put up by L. N. Kindersley, of Eton, in the hurdles; F. Besson, of Westminster, in the mile; F. L. D. Garforth, of Rugby, in the 100yds.; and Alec Glen, of Taunton, in the steeplechase, who beat the holder of the challenge cup, H. A. L. Donkin, of Abingdon. Names of winners and times will be found on our School Sports Results page. ———

Photo. Sport & General.

The winners of the high jump at Stamford Bridge. A. W. Whittingham (City of London School), and A. J. Walker (Wellingborough), both of whom jumped 5ft. 3¼ins.

School boxing champions.—The School Championship Meeting at Aldershot this year was notable for a record entry, and the splendid work of the competitors. Critics all agree that the standard of boxing at our

Photo. Sport & General.

H. Day, of Bedford School, winning the hundred yards (14 to 16 years) at Stamford Bridge.

public schools is now much higher than it has been for many a year. No school proved

W. J. Armstrong (Worksop College), winner of bantam-weights at Aldershot.

victorious in more than one championship, a sharp contrast to last year's results, when Clifton provided no fewer than four champions. H. E. Kirkwood defended his title successfully in the welterw-eights, but E. E. McColl went down to W. J. Armstrong, of Worksop College, in the bantams; these were the only two finals in which Clifton figured. Following is a list of the champions for the year :—

J. L. Vaughan (Harrow), winner of feather-weights.

Bantams: W. J. Armstrong, Worksop.
Feather-weights: J. L. Vaughan, Harrow.
Light-weights: H. B. Hodges, Sherborne.
Welter-weights: H. S. Kirkwood, Clifton.
Middle-weights: B. U. Farrell, Queen Elizabeth School.
Heavy-weights: S. I. Fairbairn, Eton.

The men who impressed most were B. U. Farrell, H. S. Kirkwood, and S. I. Fairbairn. The last-named had a difficult job in giving considerable weight to C. G. Sasson, of Aldenham; but though he was behind on points when they stood up for the final round, he went in with such a will that he speedily wiped off the deficit and won. Kirkwood was far too good for his opponents in the welter-weight division, and he has been described as being "as good, as strong, and as unflinching a schoolboy boxer as it is possible to imagine."

In the Middle-weights G. E. A. Anderton, of Repton, made B. U. Farrell show all the cleverness of which he is capable. Anderton seems an unlucky sort of fellow, for last year he survived till the final of the welter-weights, when he ran up against the redoubtable Kirkwood. This year in the final of the middles he again had to meet one of the very best in B. U. Farrell. This is the Cranbrook boy who two years ago fought so splendidly in the bantam final with R. F. Ireland, of Tonbridge, boxing with tremendous pluck and vigour despite the fact that he had only just survived a tremendously tough struggle in his previous bout. This year Farrell's path to the middle-weight championship was by no means an easy one, for he had to meet in turn G. L. Butler, of Haileybury; H. E. Blumer, of Charterhouse; and R. Theobald, of Mill Hill. The first two especially made him fight hard, but his capacity for taking punishment pulled him through, a quality that stood him in good stead when he had to stand up against the Reptonian's swinging blows in the final. B. U. Farrell, who, since he is only sixteen years old, is probably one of the youngest boxers to appear in the middle-weights, is a man we shall probably hear a great deal more of by and by.

Has anybody here seen—no, not Kelly—but Mr. John Jones of Llanfairfechan?

H. B. Hodges (Sherborne), winner of light-weights.

For a post-card has just come addressed to him at this office, and on the back is this mournful plaint :—

"Will ye no' come back again?
Will ye no' come back again?
Better lo'ed ye canna be.
Will ye no' come back again?"

Now the author, translator, or adapter, as the case may be, of this little melody, one "P.M.H.," evidently takes Mr. John Jones's disappearance grievously to heart, for the writing has in more than one place paled where the tear-drops have fallen. Whether John Jones will come back again I cannot say, for we in this office have lost sight of him for some time now, and now and again I am inclined to fear the worst. For he was an adventurous chap, this same John Jones, and perhaps he took tea once too often with the MacPher-r-r-son, or maybe did not emerge so successfully from a second encounter with the arm of the law. But we will offer a reward for information as to his whereabouts, and perhaps the gentleman who last introduced him to our pages will step forward and claim it. Indeed, very likely.

B. U. Farrell (Queen Elizabeth's School), winner of middle-weights.

Answers to Correspondents

An Inquisitive Little Girl.—You see I am answering you "at the top," as you request, but you will have to guess again if you want to know who the Old Fag is.

H. S. Kirkwood (Clifton College), winner of welter-weights.

X. Y. Z.—A cyclostyle is a machine by means of which a large number of copies of any piece of written or typewritten matter may be duplicated.

S. I. Fairbairn (Eton), winner of heavy-weights.

They are made by the Cyclostyle Company, Tottenham Hall, London, N. The hand-fed model costs £12 12s. new, and the self-feeding machine £16 16s. The second-hand prices from the makers are £8 8s. and £12 12s. respectively. I am not acquainted with the book you mention. Can you give any further information about it?

J. H. K. (Bristol).—We have some articles on the subject in readiness, but they have been crowded out during the past winter. Look out for them next season.

A. G. C. (Lewisham).—You will probably add several inches to your height during the next two or three years. An exercise to increase one's height was published in our Answers to Correspondents last June.

Bookworm.—Any local bookbinder would bind your half-yearly volumes of THE CAPTAIN in the cover supplied by us at a charge of about eighteenpence. This sum is also the price we charge for the cover. If he has to supply a cover, his charge will, of course, be correspondingly more.

Regular Reader.—We hadn't forgotten your request, but the summer months are few, and there are so many demands on our space. Still, we will see if we cannot "oblige" this season.

T. A. S. (Cardiff).—(1) Mirrors are made by coating plate-glass with silver. The precise processes through which they pass could only be described to you by someone connected with the trade; (2) the secretary of the Captain Club in your town is Mr. Ernest Harris, 31, Bedford Street, Roath.

R. Baker.—The book you want is "Tricks that Anyone Can Do," published by Messrs. L. Upcott Gill, price 1s.

P. J. Kirkham.—(1) An advertisement in a local newspaper or in the "Cricket Challenges" column of the *Referee* would probably catch the eye of a secretary in your district. (2) It is not possible to arrange for visitors to be shown over the postage stamp printing works of the firm you mention. (3) "A History of the Inquisition in Spain," by Henry C. Lea, in four vols., price 10s. 6d. each (Macmillan & Co.), and "The Spanish Inquisition: Its Heroes and Martyrs," by Janet Gordon. The following novels deal with the same period: "The Glare of Fire," by Joseph Hocking; "Spanish Brothers," by D. Alcock; "The Wizard's Mantle," by M. Halidom.

F. E. M. (Stroud Green) complains that in describing P. Kirwan and Con Leahy as English champions, and in referring to "P. J. O'Connor of Great Britain," we are not according to Ireland the credit of successes which she has achieved. Mr. F. A. M. Webster, to whose articles on "The Way to Win" the complaint refers, replies as follows: "If a man wins an English championship, no matter what his nationality, he becomes an English champion just as if an Englishman goes to America and wins a championship there he becomes an American champion. Only last year, several English championships were won by Swedes, who therefore became English champions. As regards P. J. O'Connor, he has represented Great Britain at the Olympic Games, therefore I spoke of him as P. J. O'Connor of Great Britain. I mentioned Con Leahy as many times champion of England because he won many English championships. He also won a number of Irish championships, but that does not alter the fact of his being an English champion."

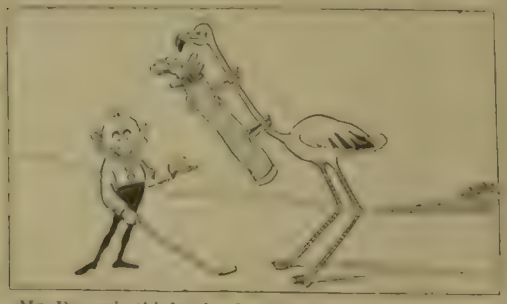
A Camper (Peterborough), and, in fact, all campers, would do well to join the Amateur Camping Club (4, New Union Street, Moorgate Street, E.C.), whose new handbook is full of valuable information about tents, kit, cooking utensils, and so forth.

F. A. C. N.—(1) A hundred miles is more than a boy of your age should cycle in one day. From sixty to eighty miles is the most that should be attempted, especially if the same distance is to be covered in several consecutive days. (2) Have you read Stevenson's books yet? They are few in number, but all good. You would especially like "Treasure Island" and "The Black Arrow." Then you might try the works of some living authors of historical and adventure stories, such as Herbert Strang, Captain Brereton, Harry Collingwood, and others. (3) A British subject usually has no difficulty in obtaining permission to visit a man-of-war. Go on board by the officer's ladder or gangway, and ask the officer of the watch for permission to be shown round.

A Hutchins School Boy (Sandy Bay) writes that Hutchins School, Hobart, having been founded in 1846, is therefore older than St. Peter's College, Adelaide, which was stated in our article on the latter to be the oldest public school in Australia, after the King's School, Paramatta. My correspondent also claims Guy Wylly as an old Hutchins School boy, and states that he and J. H. Bisbee (of the same school) were the first Australians to gain the V.C.

THE OLD FAG.

MR. BROWNIE'S CADDIE



Mr. Brownie thinks the flamingo makes a good caddie.

Here you see him making a tee for the golf ball.

Being quite at home in the water, the bird can wade after, and recover, a lost ball.

While if the club subscription is too high, he thinks nothing of taking you twenty miles to another town where golf is cheaper.

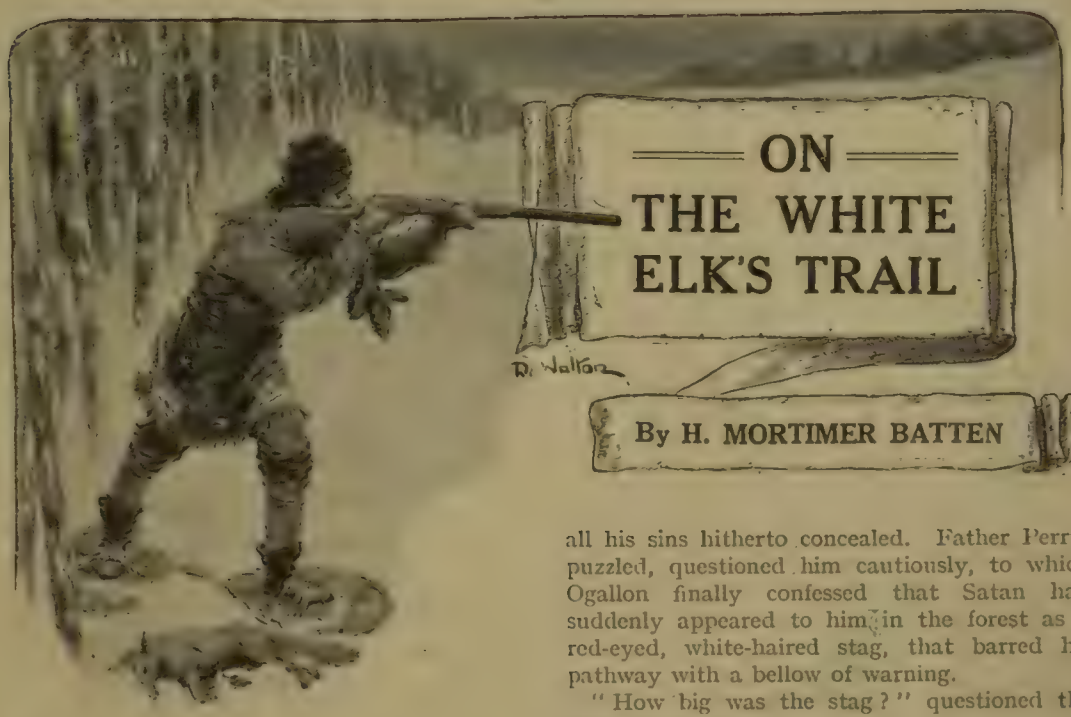
"TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES"

The Somewhat Suspicious-looking Gentleman: "Done yer good turn for to-day?"

Little Lawrence: "Er—no, sir; not yet."

The Somewhat Suspicious-looking Gentleman: "Then carry this swag—bag, I mean."

As the enraged elk prepared for a final charge, the millionaire caught the boy by the shoulder, and hurled him from the trap.



ON THE WHITE ELK'S TRAIL

By H. MORTIMER BATTEN

IT was old man Crombit, ex-whisky pedlar, ex-trapper, ex-pilot, and ex-sheriff, who first saw the white elk of Nessing's Ford. It was midsummer, and Crombit was returning from his fish traps on Lake Shimmergreen to his shanty, by way of a little game path through dense bush when, shortly after the fall of dusk, he was suddenly startled by a shrill whistle among the shadows just ahead. Next moment a vague white object, large as a horse and ghostly looking in the gloom, suddenly appeared not ten yards away and uttered an uninviting roar. The story goes that old Crombit dropped his fish with a howl, and never stopped running till he reached the lumber camp at the baseline.

Of course, the boys advised him to try coffee for a change, but next morning old Crombit persuaded one or two of them to return to the runway with him, and there, sure enough, were the marks of an immense deer!

"Some old stag been wallowing in a lime spring," suggested the boys, but for a week or so Crombit remained at the lumber camp till his nerves were restored to a normal state.

The next to see the white stag was Ogallon, the Indian boy, who arrived one evening at the settlement hatless and minus one moccasin. He had voice for no one till he reached the mission station, where he threw himself at the feet of the Father Superior and began to confess all his sins hitherto concealed. Father Perry, puzzled, questioned him cautiously, to which Ogallon finally confessed that Satan had suddenly appeared to him in the forest as a red-eyed, white-haired stag, that barred his pathway with a bellow of warning.

"How big was the stag?" questioned the Father Superior.

"Big as a horse!" answered the boy.

"Was it a moose?" asked Father Perry.

The Indian shook his head. "No, him no moose."

"Ha!" said the Father Superior, and next day this good man called at the shanty of Farrington, the game warder of the district.

"From all accounts," said the priest, "there is a large white elk inhabiting the region of Lake Shimmergreen and Nessing's Ford. Now if this becomes known the brute is sure to be shot this fall by the first sportsman who offers to pay the guides a good price for such a trophy. I have been thinking, Farrington, that an albino elk is worth a good deal more alive than dead, and when winter comes we can organise a hunting trip and track down the white elk in the snow. Do you not think there is more and better money in this than by allowing the brute to be shot by an American sportsman?"

"There sure is," agreed the forest ranger, gravely. "A live white elk should fetch fifteen hundred dollars, and with that amount to book the Father Superior could build a new landing-stage and repair the main avenue. We must keep it secret, Father Perry."

But no sooner had the priest turned his back than the forest ranger hastened to the Dally-house, and discussed the matter with Newman, the proprietor. "I tell you," said the forest

ranger, " if we organise a hunting trip soon as the freeze up comes, take ropes and five or six good dogs, that elk is ours, sure as a lame duck. Then, of course, we shell out and go shares." The two shook hands gravely over the deal, promised secrecy, and parted with a wink of confidence.

Newman was a lover of ready cash, however, and the next man to stroll into the saloon was Dallyman, the well-known Shimmergreen guide. Newman leant over the counter, his lips to the guide's ear. " What would you give me to tell you where a pure white bull wapiti —a whopper—can be taken ? " he queried, temptingly.

" Twenty dollars," the guide answered, promptly.

" Make it twenty-five—cash over the counter now."

" Nope. I'll give you ten over the counter, and twenty when I've seen the stag."

The exchange was made, and the guide, having convinced himself that the stag really existed, wrote to a millionaire sportsman at Chicago, and received a promise of a hundred and fifty dollars to keep his secret—the sum to be paid on the killing of the elk by the American sportsman.

A week later the forest ranger and the guide met on the banks of Lake Shimmergreen, each carrying a trumpet of birchbark as used for calling moose. They stared at each other maliciously.

" What you doing round about here with a call trumpet this time of year ? " asked the ranger.

" Just takin' the census like," answered Dallyman, affably.

The ranger's inquiring glance fixed him searchingly. " What are you after, anyway ? " he asked.

" Same as you, I guess," Dallyman confessed. " Don't happen to have seen him about, do you ? "

Thus the story of the white elk became more or less common property, and several of the inhabitants of Nessing's Ford managed to make money out of it. In the meantime the old priest, having every confidence in Farrington, got busy on his designs for a new landing-stage and his estimates for repairs to the main avenue.

There was yet another person, however, who knew of the existence of the white bull elk—a person of such insignificance that no one would have troubled to confide such a secret to him. This person was Carry Bliss, a crippled boy, and, perhaps, the most familiar figure at the settlement.

Carry had met with an accident when an infant, and since then had hobbled through life on one leg—the other being so twisted and feeble that it was more of a hindrance than a help to him. Carry was an orphan. On his father's death he received the sum of five hundred dollars, with which he bought a horse and buggy—driving the few visitors who came to and from the station, and over the miles of appalling forest trail that checkered the surrounding country. This, indeed, was the only work of which Carry was capable, but the poor old horse had become feeble with the seasons, while the buggy looked as though a strong gust of wind might cause its total collapse.

One evening Carry was driving through the woods alone when he noticed the slots of a great deer leading along the pathway ahead. So fresh were the slots that muddy water was still trickling into them, and as presently the old horse shuffled round a corner, Carry beheld a scene that caused his hair to rise on end. There, in the very centre of the trail, with head half lowered and forelegs wide apart, stood a gigantic white wapiti ! So magnificent a beast the boy had never before imagined, and as the great deer raised its head and regarded him with savage inquiry, Carry's soul was filled with admiration. But next moment the great stag, with a whistle of warning, dashed away into the woods, leaving only its giant spoor behind it.

Now Carry, though his walk in life was a humble one, was not without ambition and business ability. Some day he hoped to scratch together sufficient dollars to build an eating-house, and towards this end he worked.

" That elk would be worth a deal sight more alive than dead," he told himself. " So I'll just keep the secret of his whereabouts till I see how things are going to pan out."

Forthwith Carry wrote to the curator of a certain zoological gardens in the States, asking what they would pay for a white bull elk standing five feet at the shoulders, and with antlers surpassing wonderful. The reply he received was somewhat vague ; but it clearly intimated that if such a beast were delivered to them in a crate, unscratched and in perfect order, they would willingly pay the vendor a very handsome sum for his pains.

This satisfied Carry. But how was he, a crippled boy, to catch a giant bull elk alive ? This was the question he put to an old In l

trapper whom he knew, and who was a genius at the use of snares.

"Wait till the snow comes," said the Indian. "I caught many moose and caribou alive. Why not elk?"

Before very long, however, Carry came to know that others shared his secret. How they would laugh if they knew that he, the poor cripple of Nessing's Ford, had once set his mind on taking the elk alive! He realised now that this ambition was far above his abilities; the white stag would fall to Dallyman, or some other individual whom fate had endowed more liberally.

The day before the opening of the game season the mid-day train brought in a stranger—an ostentatious individual, wearing a pepper-coloured tweed suit, and exceedingly baggy trousers. This person, with a huge pile of baggage, stared at the rickety old buggy, and uttered a loud, uncouth laugh.

"I asked for a vehicle," he informed the station-master. "Not a box o' tricks of that sort. If you fancy I'm going to risk my life in a loose-wheeled——"

"Then I guess you'll have to walk," retorted the official. "'Cause it's the only outfit there is for you."

"Walk be hanged!" snarled the American. "Fancy I'm going to walk all the way to Dallyman's? Hi, boy! Do you reckon you can land me as far as Shimmergreen in that coffee-grinder of yours?"

"Guess I can," agreed Carry. "Though you're no fairy weight, to be sure."

The American, who was no other than Dallyman's sportsman come to kill the white elk, was duly loaded into the buggy with all his outfit, and ten minutes later they were under way. There were steep hills to be negotiated; but the American ignored the boy's polite hint that the trail was in bad shape, and the old horse "blowing some." He calmly kept his seat, while the lame boy hobbled up the hills and the buggy sank axle-deep in the muskeg. The finishing touch came, however, when he refused to pay more than four dollars for a sixteen-mile ride through the woods, heedless of the fact that it would be midnight ere the boy and his poor old steed landed home.

"Mean swipe, anyway!" pondered Carry, in disgust. "I'll make him pay cash down coming back, or he can walk."

Summer was rapidly drawing to a close, and each night now there was a flavour of frost in the air. For the deer it was the mating season. On the shores of the great Lake Shimmergreen they fought their battles and arranged their love matches—the giant moose with their great palmated antlers, the white-necked caribou with their wonderful splayed snow-shoes, and fairy-like bands of little white-tail deer.

It was no region for wapiti. The great white monarch that had made his home there had wandered far from the heart of the barren lands the previous spring, and now found himself in a place where his kind did not dwell. Night after night he waded out into the limpid flood, and filled the whole forest with verberating challenges. But no wapiti ever answered—no mate came to him. He became sullen and morose with impatience, and as the days passed by and his loneliness continued the savage gleam in his great watchful eyes became more and more pronounced. Once, indeed, a young bull wapiti answered his challenge. The white bull dashed in the direction of the sound, and saw his adversary standing fetlock deep at the lake margin. With a roar he rushed to the attack, and the next moment the young bull was sprawling helplessly in the water. As he strove to rise two knife-edged hoofs began to pound the life out of him, till he bellowed for mercy.

Next day Dallyman and the millionaire found the young elk lying dead in the water, while all along the margin the gravel was ploughed up by the hoofs of a gigantic wapiti.

"It's the work of the white bull," said the guide. "We'll call for him somewhere near here to-night, and I bet we get him."

The American looked at the head of the young elk.

"I guess I'll take those antlers along with me," he stated. "They're worth setting up; but mind you, Dallyman, no word as to how we got them."

That night found the guide and the American ambushed near to the spot where they had found the dead elk, with rifles and call trumpet ready. At midnight the white bull arrived, and broke the silence of the lake margin with his hoarse, unlovely bugling. This time an answer came—low, soft, enticing—the answer of a cow elk. Slowly the great bull moved towards it, not even the cracking of a twig betraying his approach. Nearer and nearer he came, till suddenly the American saw a great white outline, vague in the moonlight, not fifty yards distant.

"Wait! Wait!" whispered Dallyman. But the American was too excited to wait. He raised his rifle and fired. The white elk was aware of a maddening pain about his spine. He spun round in a half-circle, bellowing with

rage, then, not knowing what had happened to him, he plunged into the lake and proceeded to swim across.

"You absolute idiot!" shouted the guide. "Didn't I tell you to wait? Then you'd have got him sure."

This was indiscreet, as the American was already wild enough at having missed his stag.

"Who you talking to, you son of a flapjack?" he shouted, in a voice loud enough to scare all the deer along the lake margin. "You start talking to me, and I'll jolly well teach you what you are up against."

But Dallyman had lost control of himself.

"It comes to this," he stormed: "you jolly well got to pay me what you promised. I got the elk here, and you gone and scared him out. I've filled my part of the contract, and you can't blame me because you've fallen short of yours."

"Pay you?" bellowed the American. "Yes, I'll pay you in hard cash, right now!"

He whipped off his tunic, but the guide stood regarding him coolly.

"Look here, my son," said Dallyman, "I ain't going to fight you, but I'll tell you what I will do, unless you pay me that hundred and fifty dollars. I'll give the editor of the *Nessing Tribute* enough personal information about you to fill half his paper. He'll take it, I promise you; because you aren't so well liked as all that either here or at home."

The florid face of the American slowly turned purple.

"So you reckon you're going to blackmail me, do you?" he snarled. "I tell you you're making a big mistake."

"Not I," Dallyman answered. "I know my ground. You can't bluff me. You should deal square, then you wouldn't get stung."

That night the American, with many grumblings and snarlings, handed over a cheque to Dallyman for a hundred and fifty dollars.

"I'll get out to-morrow morning," he said. "And I tell you what, Dallyman, you won't see me in these parts again."

"Don't want to," answered the guide. "We don't care about such swipes as you butting round, anyway. What you going to do about getting your baggage to the depot?"

"Hire the same conveyance as brought me here."

"The boy says he won't take you under fifteen dollars."

"Then get along at daybreak and tell him I'll pay. The sooner I get out o' this the better."

* * * * *

The millionaire's name for excessive meanness was a byword at Nessing's Ford, and had everyone known his character as thoroughly as Dallyman knew it, the game warder would have watched him more closely. A self-made man, he had attained his success by measures which were doubtful, to say the least, and there were stories afloat concerning his business tactics that added little to his popularity.

When, therefore, Dallyman arrived next morning with the news that the American was prepared to pay a fancy price for his buggy, a roar of mirth went up from the idlers round the depot.

"What you been feeding him on, Dallyman?" they inquired. "He seems in a mighty hurry to get out."

Dallyman wore an eternal grin, but said nothing. He took his seat in the buggy at Carry's side, and away they drove to the Shimmergreen landing.

"Sure you won't carry your gun out of the case?" inquired Carry, as the millionaire took his seat. "We might meet a white elk, or something of that sort, on the trail."

The millionaire stared at Dallyman.

"And you told me no one knew anything about the brute but you yourself," he said, viciously. "By jingo, Dallyman, I'll be even with you for all this!"

"You've shot one elk," Dallyman pointed out, with a knowing wink, indicating the head of the beast they had found dead at the lake margin. "What more do you want, my son?"

They were to catch the midnight train, and darkness had already fallen when they left the shanty on their drive through the dark forest. The American insisted upon taking a lantern, though there was little need for it, since the moon was bright.

As the old horse shuffled ahead over the muskeg trail, the rattle of the wheels filling the forest with strange echoes, Carry found himself wondering what would really happen if a moose or other giant stag attacked them. At this time of the year all the deer were most savage, and many cases were on record of moose and elk attacking things they did not understand —such as white garments hanging out to dry, or a waving lantern. Indeed, it was because he was aware of this remotely possible danger that the boy had urged the unnecessity of carrying a lantern, but evidently no such

thought had entered the head of the city-bred man at his side.

That day the white elk, suffering agonies from the wound in his back, had prowled up and down the lake margin searching for something on which to vent his anger. He slashed at the tree-trunks with his antlers, pawed up the soft, green moss, and flung it over his shoulders, and bawled defiance at a porcupine which blinked at him sleepily from a poplar.

When night came on, the great stag was half mad with pain, and in just the mood to attack anything he saw. It was, of course, a mere chance that brought him within earshot of the trail two miles from Dallyman's shanty. He heard the rattle of the buggy as it bounded over the ruts. For fully a minute he listened, motionless as a statue, then, with battle in his eyes, he rushed towards the unaccustomed sound.

What the elk saw as he drew near was a bright light, which swung to and fro in a way that was obviously meant as a challenge. What Carry and the American saw was a huge white, ghostly object, bearing down upon them with the speed of a galloping horse, and with a series of savage, laboured grunts.

"Here he is! Here he is!" shouted Carry, and for the first time for five years the old horse bucked up sufficient energy to shuffle into a gallop.

The American snatched the driving switch from the boy's hand, and as the elk came alongside he dealt the brute a stinging blow across the face. The deer jumped, squealed, shook its head, then charged the buggy. With an ear-splitting crash the mighty antlers caught the frail conveyance broadside, almost hurling the two occupants from their seats.

"If he upsets us we're finished!" yelled the American. "He'll mangle us, sure as fate!" And with these words he fell to lashing the old horse, which was already doing its utmost in the way of speed.

Truly terrifying the great elk looked, its ears laid back, its eyes flashing crimson in the light of the lantern. It was striding along beside the buggy without exertion, now and then delivering a sidelong slash of its antlers towards the occupants of the cart.

But failing to reach them, the elk was clearly losing patience. The coarse hair along its spine began to stand on end, while at intervals it uttered a sharp scream like the scream of a frightened horse. The American, standing up in the cart, proceeded to lash the great brute across the face, thus increasing its anger. Finally it stood back a few paces, and, lowering its head, made a terrific charge at the buggy. One of its antlers came in conjunction with the back wheel, smashing in the spokes like matches. The buggy took a list that way, the broken wheel threatening to let it down at any moment.

The position was by no means a pleasant one, and both men now fully realised their danger. The American began to grope for his rifle-case, but finding it he could not find his keys. Then he remembered that his cartridges were in the grip roped on the carrier behind, so that there was no hope in that direction.

The old horse, now thoroughly terrified, was quickly playing up. The elk, in a fury, slashed at the side of the buggy till the mudguards clattered to the road. The ghostly shadows of the forest, the obvious terror of their steed, and the sight of that great white, uncanny beast striving so determinedly to upset them might have filled the bravest of hearts with fear. If the buggy turned over, it was almost certain that the elk would attack them as they reached the ground, for both men realised that the brute had yet to learn that man was its most potent enemy.

Suddenly the American gave a cry of horror and clung to his seat. The injured wheel was clearly giving way beneath them. He took up his baggage, and hurled it at the elk to lighten the load. The old horse had slackened down to a shuffling trot, and was breathing heavily.

"You're all right," said the boy. "You can get up and run if we upset. But I can't! I'm lame. He'll stop behind to mangle me while you get away."

Whether it was this that put the villainous idea in the cowardly mind of the American, or whether he merely acted on the impulse of the moment, cannot be said. The elk had galloped round them in a half-circle, and was now trotting along at Carry's side of the buggy. Presently it drew back for a final charge. The American saw his chance. Quick as the strike of a rattlesnake his arm shot out. He caught the cripple by the shoulder, and hurled him headlong out of the buggy.

The elk stopped, pondered for a moment over the prostrate form of the boy, then swung round, and continued its pursuit of the horse and lantern. The American's heart sank within him when he saw that his ruse had failed. Instead of fulfilling his expectations and stopping to mangle the boy, thus giving him time to climb a tree, the brute had left Carry where he lay without attempting to injure him, and

was again trotting along beside the buggy. Once again it made a savage slash with its antlers, this time at the swaining lantern.

Then it was that a strange thing happened. One point of the spreading antlers passed through the handle of the lantern, tearing it from the bracket. The handle slipped down over a fork of the brute's horns—slipped down and hung in position within a foot of the bull's right eye, where it swung and rattled.

Instantly the elk stopped dead with a snort of apprehension. The lamp stopped with him, shining and rattling before his eyes. He began to back—slowly at first, then faster, faster. He swung round in a circle, shook his head, screamed, bucked like a broncho, and finally stood bolt upright on his hind legs. Still the lamp rattled and shone—following his movements.

It was then that a mad terror suddenly possessed the elk. Blinded by the glare, unable to judge where he was going, he plunged into the bush towards the lake margin.

In this direction, however, not ten yards from the trail, was a sheer drop of twelve feet or more from the crest of a limestone ridge. Headlong over it the elk plunged, the lantern still dangling from his antlers, to land with a sickening crash in the underbrush below.

Carry, in the meantime, had risen to his feet. He saw the whole thing happen. Twenty yards farther on he saw the buggy collapse on the side of the injured wheel, depositing the American and his baggage on the trail.

With all the haste his crippled limb would afford Carry hurried up.

He went to the crest of the ridge, and looked down. In the moonlight he saw the great white outline, vague among the shadows. Cautiously he made his way down till he stood at the side of the dead deer. Dead! Surely its flanks were moving—it was breathing!

In an instant Carry's mind was made up. The elk had fallen with one of its antlers pillowed upon a giant of the forest which lay beneath a vast criss-cross of dead logs. Quickly the boy took the strong leather belt from his loins, slipped it over one antler of the unconscious stag, then twice round the trunk of the fallen tree. This done he limped hurriedly back to the trail. With a slash of his knife he severed the rope which bound the American's packs to the baggage carrier, and leaving the American aghast he hurried back to the elk. In two minutes the brute's forefeet were tied and lashed to a second log in a helpless attitude.

Then Carry stood back, scarcely able to believe his own eyes. He, the crippled boy, had taken the white elk alive!

When Carry looked up it was to find the American standing over him. For the first time he recalled what had happened.

"You're a man, I reckon!" he sneered. "Push me out of the buggy, would you, to save your own precious hide?"

At first the American said nothing, then he broke forth with a maelstrom of apologies and lame explanations.

"It was done on the impulse of the moment," he urged. "My boy, I will repay you fully. It must go no further—really, I'll make it worth your while."

"Thanks; but I ain't to be bought that way, same as Dallyman and one or two of the others," answered the boy, proudly. "I ain't going to make any promises to hold my tongue either; so now you know."

"But really, my boy, you can see this must not be known——"

"I ain't going to make any promises," Carry answered, doggedly. But five minutes later he was discussing a new landing-stage and repairs to the main avenue with the millionaire.

"I'm always pleased to help a struggling settlement," the latter told Father Perry, when next day he had given his promise to make the necessary improvements. "People sometimes misjudge me; but I assure you I am a most generous man at heart."

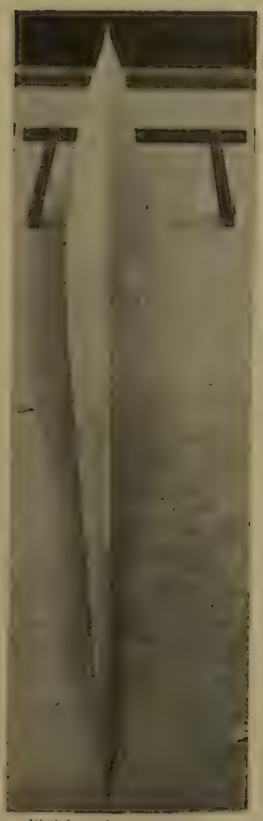
"I am sure you are," agreed the Father Superior, carried away by the totally unexpected turn of events. But though the priest received his cheque in due course, the men of Nessing's Ford never again saw the philanthropist who so improved their city.

Carry sold the white elk at a figure far above his expectations, and to-day one of the most prosperous concerns in the city is its eating-house, run by a crippled proprietor.

"Then we didn't do so badly out of the white elk," observed Dallyman, when some years later he confided his long-kept secret to Carry and one or two other old citizens. "I got a hundred and fifty, you got three hundred, and the city got a new landing-stage and repairs to the avenue. Say, I guess the American found that one of his dearest—if not his most enjoyable—hunting trips."

"Yes," added Newman, the proprietor of the hotel; "and between us three I made thirty dollars out of the white elk, but I ain't going to tell you just how."

THE END



Photo] [Sport and General

The boat used by A. Cusamajor, winner of the Wingfield Sculls from 1856 to 1860. It has a fixed seat, and the body of the boat is built triangular instead of round.

Help for the Old Boy

Are you coming to London? If so, you will probably want to join a sports club, and this article will be of considerable assistance to you. It has been specially written for "The Captain"

By HYLTON CLEAVER

THERE is a dark city of wretchedness, where many a shrinking fugitive hides, and whose tale of misery is ever long and never told (and so forth). They call this playground of villainy, London. Into it, great English schools all over the country pour their Old Boys, at the end of every term; boys who, used to games hallowed by the finest sportsmanship in the world, find themselves, more often than not, lonely and uncertain how they may now make sure of exercise. For these I have a very real sympathy, bred of experience; and with whom I would shake a paw and speak awhile, scattering before them pearls of information which I have gone to some trouble to collect, and which I trust will prove right useful.

Old Boys from country schools are under an especial disadvantage in this matter, since they scatter so much more widely than do the past members of the London schools, with the result that they are unable, for the most part, to form successful Old Boy clubs. Old Paulines, Old Alleynians, O. M. T.'s, Old Carthusians—all these, and many others, have at least their football teams; but, although every country school *has* its Old Boy club, the men who leave school to come to London cannot support it.

With a view to assisting these unfortunates to select clubs, I shall deal in this article, not with the history of any in particular, but briefly with the special advantages offered by certain carefully selected ones, and with the approximate cost entailed by membership; which is, I know, an important consideration with the boy recently made old. I have therefore selected for each sport, not necessarily the crack clubs, but those which are in my opinion the best for the purpose of those for whom I am writing; and in most cases I have endeavoured to choose only those with which I have personally come into contact. When, therefore, good, and possibly better-known, clubs are missing from my lists, the omission must not be assigned to ignorance or forgetfulness; and I also take this opportunity of saying most emphatically that no slight of any kind is intended upon clubs not mentioned. It has been impossible to deal with more than a very small percentage of clubs, and I have therefore tried to confine my remarks to those that I know well. If any details seem incomplete, I shall be delighted to furnish any information required, to the best of my ability, and in most cases to introduce officials of the clubs, or to answer any inquiries in THE CAPTAIN Correspondence Column, or, in urgent cases, through the post on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Letters should be addressed to me c/o the editor.

Now, if you will sit forward on your chairs ears cocked, we will begin.

First, I would unhesitatingly recommend the Old Boy seeking his recreation to join a crack

TERRITORIAL

regiment, and I have selected, as most suitable, the Honourable Artillery Company and the Artists' Rifles. I recommend these, not only on account of the excellent military training which is assured, but also because attached to each is a splendid school of arms where men can "train" really thoroughly, and a variety of athletic clubs, membership of any one of

which will find a man numberless friends in each of the others. The H.A.C. entails rather more expense than the Artists', but even here the cost is not so large as is imagined. Their imposing headquarters are at Armoury House, City Road, Finsbury, E.C. A man joining the artillery section will find that his uniforms will cost about £7, whilst an infantryman will not need to run to more than about £2 10s. The subscription to the corps is £2 2s. per annum, and includes the cricket, hockey, Rugby and Association football clubs, the miniature rifle range shooting, revolver shooting, school of arms, etc.; in fact, all the most attractive features of an athletic and social club. At camp, 3s. a day is charged for messing; but against this must be put the pay received by each man, which varies from 1s. a day for a private to 4s. 6d. for a senior non-com. Gunners may be required to pay £1 a year for horse hire, but they are undoubtedly taught to ride exceedingly well. There is also a first-rate swimming club, and a water-polo team which holds the Ter i-torial Championship and which has fixtures with the 'Varsities and all the best teams. An old public-school man looking over Armoury House for the first time will assuredly be seized with a desire to become a member of the H.A.C. forthwith, as these headquarters form an excellent club for a lonely man in London, and combine most of the sports and interests that a young fellow should take up.

The subscription to the Artists' Rifles is £1 5s. per annum, and there are no other expenses, either at camp or in respect of uniforms. The clubs are, however, separate. The corps possesses the finest school of arms of any battalion, and has a fine array of instructors. Jerry Driscoll and Wally Morgan, for example, take boxing, which is a sufficient guide to the quality of the tuition. The corps are unbeatable at bayonet fighting, and have an amazing record of successes. I may say that the school of arms is not confined to members of the corps, outsiders being eligible for election at a subscription of £1 1s. per annum. To members of the corps this is reduced to 15s. There is, of course, a miniature range, and also an excellent swimming club, and a boating club at Philhurst. The members of the corps are, in my opinion, as fine a set of men as you will find in any club mentioned in this article, and though the qualification for membership—which was originally confined to artists, professional men, medical students, and public school boys—is now a little more elastic, the standard of men is still as high as ever. I can thoroughly recommend old public school boys to this corps. The Artists' headquarters are in Dukes Road, Euston Road, W.C. It should be recognised that both these regiments are abnormally keen on military training, and this is, of course, the first consideration in each case.

With regard to

SWIMMING,

both the H.A.C. and the Artists' have, as I have mentioned, excellent clubs; but for the "civilian," I plump for the Otter. This is *the* club in the swimming world, and attracts a great number of old 'Varsity and public school men; their baths are those used by the H.A.C. and the Artists'—the St. George's Baths, Buckingham Palace Road, the club night being Tuesday. The entrance fee is one guinea, and the subscription half a guinea. There is no better swimming club than the Otter, and, since the expenses are quite small, there is little need to seek any farther. The hon. sec. is A. E. Baldon, Esq., 32, Strand, W.C.

Similarly, there is one predominant club at

BOXING,

namely, the Belsize. The club this year gave up the right to the Eyre Arms Assembly Rooms for their annual display. This has always been the venue of a most popular meeting, but a cinema company has now stepped in and secured the hall. Their headquarters are still, however, at the "Eyre Arms," St. John's Wood, and their last display was held at the National Sporting Club. They have a most imposing array of instructors, headed by Jerry Driscoll and Brock. The subscription is 10s. per annum; there is also an entrance fee of 10s., and although there is a waiting list of prospective members, the club has always a hearty welcome for old public school boys, who will, I am certain, find the Belsize all that they could desire.

The German Gym., whose headquarters are in Pancras Road, N.W., have a boxing section, and the subscription to this is 10s. per annum.

There is also a good boxing club attached to the Thames Rowing Club, Putney, for which the subscription is 10s. 6d., and the members of the Auriol and Kensington Rowing Clubs likewise box during the winter on certain nights.

Mention has already been made of the good boxing to be obtained by membership of the H.A.C. and the Artists'.

Amongst boxers you will always find a great percentage of oarsmen, and we can therefore appropriately turn to

ROWING

clubs. The three leading clubs may be said to be London and Thames, at Putney, and the Kingston R.C., whose headquarters are at Ravens Ait.

It would be neither safe nor helpful to estimate expenses incidental to the season, as these depend entirely upon the amount of rowing done. The expenses of a week at Henley usually amount to £7 or £8, but men in their first year are not likely to be included in such crews. Minor charges are made for lockers, towels, etc., by all clubs, and other expenses can be regulated by each member. Personally, I do not think that a man who takes up rowing will ever give it up again for another summer sport; the glory of it grows with experience.

There is an entrance fee of £2 and a subscription of £2 2s. per annum to both the London and Thames, whilst Kingston fix their entrance fee at £1 1s. and their subscription at £2 2s.

Present members of Universities and public schools are admitted to the Thames and Kingston clubs without entrance fee at an annual subscription of £1 1s., and London also have a rule permitting cadet members, who must be relations of full members.

Rowing men will undoubtedly get the best rowing obtainable by membership of any of these clubs, and they are particularly suited to men who are already good oars and who wish for good rowing.

Of the rather less famous clubs I would mention the Auriol and Kensington R.C., whose quarters adjoin one another at Hammersmith. There is an entrance fee to the Auriol of 10s. 6d., and the subscription is £1 11s. 6d. per annum. Here, again, other expenses depend upon the amount of rowing done, as members pay entrance fees to club races, and a proportion of the cost of competition at up-river regattas. The club pays particular attention to raw members, who on joining are "tubbed" for a period, and are then gradually brought on until they become competent to row in club races. The best are then chosen for the junior eight for up-river competitions. Those left over are provided with other club races, whilst scullers have every opportunity of good coaching. Membe s joining the Auriol after September 1st are not liable for a subscription for the following year, and no entrance fee is charged to members of other clubs who join. The hon. sec. to the club is E. J. Selway, Esq.

Kensington R.C. has an entrance fee of 10s. 6d. and an annual subscription of £1 10s.

The School of Arms of the Honourable Artillery Company.

The committee of the club also have the power to elect any candidate under the age of eighteen as cadet members on terms of subscription such as they may decide. The senior men put all novices through a thorough course of training, as do the Auriol, and both clubs work on very similar lines. The social side is well looked after in each case; dancing, concerts, running, boxing, etc., being indulged in by the members. The Hon. Sec. of the Kensington R.C. is J. J. Gibbons, Esq., of 5*a*, Lyric Road, Barnes, S.W.

As an enthusiastic rowing man, I should like, before leaving this subject, to tender my sincere thanks to the committee-men and hon. secretaries of all these clubs for the courteous assistance extended to me, in each case, in preparing this article. Rowing clubs are notoriously jealous of their pride, and I am anxious that the valuable particulars which I have been enabled to give to CAPTAIN readers should not be taken in any way as touting for members, or by way of comparison between the clubs. I give them because, before joining a club, a man requires to know these facts, and I hope in so doing to save readers the trouble of writing to the various secretaries in person.

With regard to the other great summer pastime, I will not set out, in this article, to select cricket clubs for CAPTAIN readers, because the task would be too hopeless, but, since so many men play

CRICKET,

I dare say that the following information may assist Old Boys in selecting clubs and playing the game under the most desirable conditions. There are, of course, clubs in every district, and in many cases men will like to support their own local eleven; but, for the benefit of those who prefer more expansive prospects, I may say that the subscription to the Surrey County Club is £2 2*s*. and the entrance fee the same amount. Schoolboy members under the age of nineteen are eligible for election at an entrance fee of £1 1*s*. and an annual subscription of 10*s*. 6*d*. There are, of course, many benefits attached to membership, and as it is not easy to get good cricket at a smaller subscription than £2 2*s*. or £1 10*s*. per annum, the Surrey Club is one that I would suggest straight away. Besides this there is, of course, the Wanderers' Club, Surrey, which is a touring combination on the same lines as the Sussex Martlets, and the Bluemantles (of Kent). Men looking out for a club should purchase the "Club Cricketers' Handbook" (price 3*d*.), published by the Cricket & Sports Publishers, Ltd., of 353, Strand, W.C. This little work gives a directory

"The Artists" enjoying grim realities.

of club secretaries, and full information as to the situation of grounds, nearest railway stations, etc., as well as no end of useful notes on the game, and will tell cricketers far more than I can attempt in this article. Before passing on, I may, perhaps, draw attention to the excellence of such clubs as the Incogniti, I Zingari, Wanderers, Sussex Martlets, Bluemantles, Hampstead, Streatham, Beckenham, Ilford, Ealing, Spencer, and the Cyphers; but these are only the more prominent clubs that occur to me in running through a mental list. Men, by the bye, engaged in banks will find that all bank cricket is good and thoroughly worth supporting.

CROSS-COUNTRY RUNNING

men are well catered for in this London of ours, particularly by the Blackheath, Ranelagh, and South London Harriers. Blackheath have exceptionally comfortable headquarters and bathing accommodation, and also a cheery social side to the club. The subscription is 10*s.* 6*d.* The hon. sec. is E. J. D. Ratcliff, Esq., 53, Bellingham Road, Catford, and the club days are Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and Saturday evenings. There are some slight extra expenses at the option of members, such as the prize fund and the magazine, but running with the Blackheath men is particularly enjoyable and quite inexpensive. The Ranelagh club rooms are at the "Fox and Hounds," Putney, and runs start from the "Green Man," Putney Heath. The subscription is 10*s.* 6*d.*, and J. F. Lintott, Esq., of 27, Semley Road, Norbury, is the hon. sec. Club runs take place on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons, and sundry competitions are held, followed, as a rule, by cheery smoking concerts. The club has fixtures with Cambridge University, and, of course, with Blackheath and the South London men. The headquarters of the latter are at Coulsdon, the subscription is 10*s.* 6*d.*, and the hon. sec is D. F. Upton, Esq., of "Bannisdale," Parkhill Road, Wallington. The club has runs on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from Croydon at seven o'clock, and these are followed by a very pleasant open-air bath. There are also, of course, competitions.

Perhaps the best help I can give to

LAWN TENNIS DEVOTEES

is to supply the name and address of the secretary of the Lawn Tennis Association, viz., B. Sabelli, Esq., 49, Queen Victoria Street, E.C. It is useless to attempt to select clubs, because at this game they are almost entirely local. The magazine *Lawn Tennis and Badminton* is the official organ of the L. T. A., and this is published by the Amateur Sports' Publishing Co., Ltd., of 353, Strand, W.C.

The London Rowing Club Boathouse—the Oxford crew's quarters at Putney during training.

Turning to winter sports, both codes of football, like cricket, are games at which it is such a ticklish matter to select clubs from the enormous number which are all equally desirable and successful that men will be well advised to use their own discretion as to which they shall join. Personally, I would not counsel a man to join a club in which he knows not a soul. At best he will feel strange and lonely for a while, and this may put him off his game. At

RUGBY

I could not honestly recommend a man to join one of the crack teams such as the Harlequins, Blackheath, or Richmond unless he be a pretty good player. This may seem a peculiar thing to say; but I really think that the common or garden Rugger man will be happier in one of the lesser known clubs where most interest is not vested entirely in the first Fifteen. I know a very happy band of sportsmen who go to make up the Park House R. F. C., whose ground is at Mottingham, Kent—not so far out as it sounds—and in this club I feel confident that Old Boys will find very good fellowship and good Rugger of the clean, hard sort; it is one of the few clubs where I think a stranger will feel at home at once. The subscription is 12*s.* 6*d.* Of the crack clubs, the three that I have mentioned are not expensive, and old school colours and other good men will be well advised to join. The "A" teams of each club play a number of public schools and get some very good Rugger. The subscription is about 10*s.* 6*d.* in each case, and most of the leading clubs fix their subscription hereabouts; there is sometimes an entrance fee of about the same amount, and generally honorary members are enrolled at a reduced subscription. Men joining need have no fear that the expense will be too much for their pockets. Nearly every Rugby club has an annual dance, and one or two cheery "smokers" that follow dinners during the year.

The hon. sec. of Blackheath is B. C. Hartley, Esq., Woodbank, Sidcup, Kent; of Richmond, W. V. L. Mallett, Esq., 7, Knollys Croft, Leigham Court Road, Streatham Hill; and of the Harlequins, A. D. Stoop, Esq., West Hall, Byfleet. The secretary of the Rugby Union is C. J. B. Marriott, Esq., and letters addressed to the Rugby Union Ground, Twickenham, will find him. A list of affiliated clubs is given in the Rugby Union Handbook (price 4*d.*, post free), and in the Rugby Football Annual (price 7½*d.*, post free) from Messrs. Williams & Walker, Church Street, Twickenham, or from the Secretary of the Rugby Union, or Messrs. Hays, 26, Old Bond Street and 80, Cornhill.

For the rest, there are so many good clubs now as compared with the few prominent ones of one time that I dare not detail their advantages. The Rugby Union Handbook does so concisely and effectually.

At

SOCCER

I may perhaps draw similar attention to the Casuals, Hampstead, Beckenham, Clapham Rovers, and Townley Park. The Casuals which is, I think, the best club of all for the man leaving a public school, run three teams, two of which play matches on Saturdays. The other plays chiefly on Wednesdays. The first team plays in the Southern Amateur League Matches, and also in the A.F.A. Cup, and has friendly matches with Oxford and Cambridge. The second team plays chiefly schools, hospitals, banks, etc., as does the Wednesday team. The subscription is 10*s.* per annum, and there is also an entrance fee of the same amount. The hon. sec. is R. C. Cutler, Esq., of 2, Harcourt Buildings, Temple, E.C.

The hon. secs. of the other clubs are, in the same order as they are named: A. G. Chaplin, Esq., 101, West End Lane, N.W.; E. H. Jones, Esq., 23, Copers Cope Road, Beckenham; R. C. Bainbridge, Esq., 121, North Side, Clapham Common, S.W.; and C. M. B. Were, Esq., Rock-a-Nore, Chestnut Road, West Norwood. The ground of the latter club is at West Dulwich. Many tours on the Continent are now undertaken by our leading clubs, and Richmond may be credited with having set the example. The hon. sec. of this excellent club is P. J. Berkhant, Esq., of 5, Whittington Avenue, E.C.

The hon. sec. of the A.F.A is H. Hughes-Onslow, Esq., of 79½, Gracechurch Street, E.C., and the handbook of the association can be obtained on application to him.

A great number of men now play

HOCKEY,

and there are consequently a great number of clubs in all districts from which to choose. Staines, Kingston Hill, Beckenham, Teddington, Richmond, and Tulse Hill may be mentioned as approximately the first six, and the subscription is in most cases £1 1*s.*, sometimes accompanied by a small entrance fee, and a similarly moderate charge for tea expenses—5*s.* or so for the season. The hon. secretaries of these clubs are—in the same order as above—C. J. Keeping, Esq., The Shanty, Staines; Vernon King-Farlow, Esq., Rosemead, Littleworth Common, Esher; C. A. Collins, Esq., The Park, Beckenham; F. V. Bindon, Esq., Golder's Hill School, Golder's Green, N.W.; S. A. Turner, Esq., Westbourne House, Twickenham; and P. J. Laing, Esq., 38, Romola Road, Herne Hill, S.E. All these clubs have beautiful grounds, and hockey men are certain of good games with any of them. Beyond these, it would be too prodigious a task to give details. I may say, however, that the hon. sec. of the Hockey

Association is J. A. Lovell, Esq., 2, Snow Hill, London, E.C., from whom information on clubs and the game generally may be obtained.

Before passing on, I may perhaps make special mention of a club that I can particularly recommend—the South Herts. Their ground is at Whetstone, and the subscription is £1 1*s*. This club is undoubtedly rising rapidly. Their first eleven have a thoroughly good fixture list, and within a couple of years I expect to see them figuring as one of the leading hockey clubs, for they have the right sort of men, and, above all, they are keen. The hon. sec. is C. R. Dibben, Esq., Chadacre, Somerset Road, New Barnet.

LACROSSE.

I was talking a little while ago to a lacrosse man

"You see," he pointed out, "the great advantage of this game is that you've got a stick in your hand—it's something to whang."

"Ah," said I, wisely, "but you have that in hockey."

"Yes," he said, impressively, "only in this game *you can whang it above your head!*"

I do not point to this as a particularly bright clause in the rules, and I do not seek by it to encourage men to take up the game, but those who have a fancy for lacrosse, or who are already adept, deserve some little space in this article. Let it be known then that there are good lacrosse clubs at Catford, Lee, Clapham, Finchley, Hampstead, Purley, Boston Park (the West London Club), Neasden (Willoughby Club), Woodford, Blackheath, Croydon, Buckhurst Hill, Highgate, and Surbiton. The first two named, which I am in a position personally to recommend, are largely composed of Old Boys from St. Dunstan's College, but others are eligible, and to these the subscription is 17*s*. 6*d*. With reference to the other clubs above mentioned the subscription is in most cases 12*s*. or 15*s*., and the game is not expensive.

A peculiar feature of lacrosse is, of course, that, of the twelve positions in the field, no two are precisely alike in their functions, and this enhances the interest and general effect of the game. There is no off-side, there are no touch-lines, and it is a tremendously fast game in which the only point in scoring is the goal. The game, of course, came to us from Canada, but it has now been played here for forty years, and men are yearly taking it up. Beef or weight is not essential, and, although players should be quick with the eye and of good stamina, men with no pretensions to physical strength or size may make very fine players.

The Practical Jester: "Marry, ye good knight must never know who hath emblazoned yonder quaint device upon his stainless shield, or that I am in hopeful case to rake me in a well-earned ten per centum on ye future sales of ye polish!"

The LAST of HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell

SYNOPSIS OF OPENING INSTALMENTS

At the beginning of the January term it is announced that the Captain of Kellcaster School is not returning, and the captaincy falls to Penn. The latter is the sixth member of his family to hold the position, and it had been a great disappointment to him that he was not elected to it last term. Unlike his five brothers, he is not brilliant at sport, and the more thoughtful Kellcastrians wonder whether he will be equal to the task of maintaining his newly acquired authority.

Among the new boys is an eighteen-year-old American, named Maxon Rope, whom Penn discovers teaching the juniors baseball when they should be playing football. Rope is defiant when Penn informs him that he must conform to certain unwritten school rules. The American collects a few juniors, including Gage and Ellis, known as the Persian Lambs, sows in them the seeds of rebellion against school traditions, and proposes that they form themselves into a league to strike for the "rights" of juniors, calling themselves the Birds of Freedom.

Though the school does not know it, Penn is working for an important 'Varsity scholarship, and, advised by the head master, he spends a week-end in Cambridge to interview a don. While there he calls upon his brother Jim, who is troubled by a horse-dealer who has a grudge against him, and threatens, unless he receives thirty pounds by an early date, to report Jim Penn for "breaking gate," an offence for which he is liable to be "sent down."

Rope calls a meeting of the Birds of Freedom, telling Gage that he has a first-rate plan to lay before them.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ASTONISHING ADVENTURE

THE meeting of the Birds of Freedom in Rope's study that afternoon was exhilarating from many points of view. It was a score, for one thing, off their President and Founder himself, for, houseless as they had been since the discovery of their lair upon the Ruin's roof, he had ruthlessly refused to let them use his study, and now that, for the nonce, they had their shining hour the Persian Lambs were not slow to improve it. While they took it turn by turn to enjoy his basket-chair, the Maggot and Willet perched upon the table, and the other Birds assembled browsed inquisitively among his photographs and belongings, what time he was supposed to be unfolding his scheme. "Supposed" is used advisedly, for once told it must be gone through from the beginning again; its brilliance and audacity were too blinding for immediate comprehension. "And, of course," urged Rope, persuading them, "I'll bear the brunt."

"As you did in the debate," said Gage, maliciously.

But their P. and. F. refused to let them nettle him. When he had produced his biscuit-tin and passed it round, he went on to insinuate that all who stood by him this time might quite likely be invited there again.

"You promise?" the Persian Lambs insisted.

Rope shook his head and stroked his upper lip.

"No, I'll see how you carry on," he smiled. "I don't promise absolutely; but it's likely."

It may have been this prospect which prevailed, for when Simpson Minor's pious protest had been snuffed out (as it always was), their P. and F. was deputed to go into the town on Wednesday for such accessories as he deemed desirable.

"And you two had better come down with me," he remarked, to Gage and Ellis.

But here he met a blunt refusal. For if the Persian Lambs had one antipathy it was to spending the precious moments between dinner and call-over on half-holidays in leave-off to the town. When a fellow hadn't any money, they declared, it only made him jealous to gape among the shops; give *them* the woods and that sort of thing, you know. Not that they felt anything but pity for the members of the Botanical and Field Club, who, as they expressed it, progged about for beetles in a chain gang, or went off stalking daisies with a microscope. They might be dense, but they couldn't see the fun in that.

So Rope was compelled to saunter forth alone; and if you had been able to follow his movements you would have observed that he neglected to purchase the tooth-paste for which he went ostensibly, but spent some time in sundry hardware shops, whereout he emerged with bulkier pockets. His face was touched with placid satisfaction as he wended slowly up the hill again; but when he glimpsed Penn in the avenue he halted, and not until the captain's form had vanished did he pursue his happy journey to the School House. There he bolted his study door, and one by one disposed of his purchases in the cupboard, cocking his head askew to eye them ere he turned the key.

"You're fine!" he told them, with enthusiasm. "You're fine!"

It was after school next morning that the cupboard was unlocked, when, stealthily, the Birds of Freedom dribbled in, each departing a moment afterwards with something stowed away beneath his coat. And pockets bulged suspiciously when they took their places presently in the dining-hall, which might have raised remark at less interesting moments But their neighbours one and all were far too busy, for the fare to-day was roast mutton and "spotted donkey"—and the Kellcaster spotted donkey repays attention. It is comforting and very curranty.

Hall hummed with subdued voices, pleasantly relieved by the rustle of the maids as they hied them to and fro between the tables and the serving shutters. The sunshine, streaming through the windows, dealt prettily with the glass and napery of the "High," where the masters sat with appetites as good as any.

The High formed the fourth side of an oblong, and in the centre of this figure was placed the Sixth Form table. From his place at its head Penn was struck with the appearance of Maxon Rope, who looked pale and restless. It occurred to Penn that he might be feeling unwell, and he leaned forward more than once to catch his eye. But, either by accident or design, Rope avoided him.

And then it was the astonishing thing happened.

The mutton had disappeared, and plates were being changed for spotted donkey when, with a sharp cough, Rope sprang to his feet and fumbled in his pocket. Obviously a signal, his movement was followed here and there at the junior tables, where small figures rose bashfully, each extricating some object from concealment. Hardware mugs these objects proved to be! Some white, some brown, some blue; no two identical.

Ellis, for example, was flourishing a green mug; Gage a pink one; that of Simpson Minor, farther down the table, bore in gilt letters the inscription—A PRESENT FOR A GOOD BOY; and the Maggot's was illustrated with the picture of a cathedral. Willett's, on the other hand, seemed more a cup than mug, and was fitted with one of those contrivances which is supposed to keep the beard from getting wetted; and of their kindred Birds, dotted here and there like signposts of revolt, one displayed a vessel that was certainly a shaving-mug, and another a tin implement designed to hold a quart.

So they stood, their eyes turned timorously on Rope, who gesticulated and extended a lordly tankard. It was of pewter. It was burnished. And it shone.

The sense that something was afoot spread quickly, and while the maids, arrested in their service, stood and gaped, such an instantaneous stillness held the hall that, although Penn did not raise his voice when he bade Rope to sit down, the command sounded like a clap of thunder. The masters, staring in astonishment, realised that Rope was actually addressing them.

"Mr. Fellowes? If you please, sir?" he said, courteously.

It was only on Sundays that Pater Bovo dined in hall, and to-day, as luck would have it, Mr. Fellowes happened to be occupying the chair at the High's head. And so it was to him that Rope appealed.

"If you please, sir," he repeated, "I should like a glass of beer."

"A what?" the master cried, involuntarily.

At arm's length, Rope raised his shining pewter. The Birds copied his action with their mugs.

"Sir," said Rope, again, "a glass of beer."

Penn moved sharply, but the American had cut the ground from under him. It was not for

Penn to interpose between Rope and the higher authority to whom he so adroitly turned; his crafty appeal was addressed direct to Cæsar, and by Cæsar only could he now be judged. And when his neighbours endeavoured to pull him down, he checkmated them by stepping over the form, and advancing boldly some paces from the table. There he stood, his gay pewter uplifted.

"Mr. Fellowes, we request a glass of beer," he insisted for the third time; but his tones were very gentle and persuasive.

Cæsar—in the person of Mr. Fellowes—was standing also, quivering in amazement. He fidgeted his table-napkin, and called for silence. A superfluous injunction, since all were too absorbed for speech.

"Now, Rope," he said, "have you taken leave of your senses?"

"Oh, no, sir," Rope said, sweetly. "We are only asking for something which we ought to have. Which we've the right to, sir, by the Act of Incorporation."

"The what?" responded Mr. Fellowes, as the napkin fluttered from his fingers.

Smiling queerly, Rope glanced at a slip of memorandum.

"Sir, in 1799," came his quiet answer, "the pious founders of this school believed that malt and hops were good for growing lads. So they expressed a wish that every pupil in the school should be supplied at dinner with a glass of beer. They did, sir, really. You'll find it stipulated in the schedule of our Trust Act. The school is bound by that, sir, to supply it to us." Rope turned and indicated the upright Birds. "We request the beer the school is bound to give."

"Say that again," commanded Mr. Fellowes. while his colleagues began to exchange whispers.

So Rope repeated it, for he was thoroughly enjoying himself. "And I know, sir," he concluded, cleverly, "that you will be the very first to respect an old rule and tradition, and to see, sir, that we get our beer."

"H'm!" gasped Mr. Fellowes. "Oh!" While the veteran drawing-master leaned forward and whispered.

"When I first came, Fellowes, all the boys had beer—even the little chaps. Perhaps this explains it."

"But Mr. Bullock stopped it?"

"Yes, yes!" the other murmured.

"Ah! Rope, where did you get that preposterous idea from?"

"Sir, it isn't preposterous. I've seen it with my own eyes. In the Act of Incorporation, sir."

"You have?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"And when, pray?" Mr. Fellowes cried, sarcastically.

"A few days ago, sir. On the last day of May."

"And assuming that it is so—which I don't grant for a moment, not a moment, mind—do you really ask for beer?"

"If you please, sir," Rope said, firmly.

Very slowly Mr. Fellowes turned and surveyed the sundry small forms which were standing in their sundry places exhibiting their sundry drinking vessels.

"And you?" he thundered. "And you? Do *you* want beer?"

"Yes, sir," faltered the Persian Lambs.

"Yes, sir," came from Willett and the Maggot.

"Yes, sir," followed in other piping tones.

Penn raised his head, and one by one he looked them in the face. And each Bird, before Penn's glance passed on, dropped back confused and blushing in his place.

But Maxon Rope maintained his ground audaciously. Aware that his position was unassailable, and absolutely determined to yield to nothing but physical violence, he looked more ingenuous and confident than ever.

His colleagues were restrained, of course, by etiquette from taking the matter out of the gentle house master's hands. He, poor man, divining instantly that Rope was speaking the truth, felt awkward and exceedingly uncomfortable; the situation was unparalleled, and he had no precedents to guide him. Beer? No, the fellow shouldn't get that. But could he punish him for making what seemed to be an orthodox request?

In this impasse his eye fell on the prim form of the bursar, who nodded, rose, and went out hastily.

"Sir!" Rope kept repeating. "I'm very thirsty."

With the exception of Penn and one or two of the prefects, Kellcaster was very naturally enjoying the situation. Rope's insistence was tremendously exciting; they hoped he would not get his beer, but they owed him something for a ripping rag. They glanced covertly from him to Penn; how the captain chafed to fire the fellow out!

"I am very thirsty, sir!" cried Rope again. "I am awfully thirsty."

CHAPTER XIV

IN CONFIDENCE

"OH! You are very thirsty, are you?" The voice thrilled the hall, and terrified it. Every eye was dropped immediately, and the masters had all risen in their places. For Pater Bovo, summoned by the bursar, was standing at the door behind the High.

"Rope, put that pot down. Place your hands behind you."

But Rope needed no bidding. The pewter pot had already slipped from his fingers; and, all his self-assurance oozing, he remained a stricken and an outcast figure; while his confederates turned hot and cold and hot again, thanking their stars that they had subsided in the nick of time.

"Lift your head up, Rope."

Rope raised his hanging head

"Look me in the face, boy." Pater Bovo paused, and his glance of flame swept up and down the tables; you could almost, Lynge said afterwards, feel it scorch you. "Now, if any boy presumes to raise this matter again, or to speak of it—it will be very, very much the worse for him. Rope, go off to my study."

Rope turned, and passed out guiltily. The Head turned also, but he left open the door at which he had stood, and they listened, without speaking, to the stately measure of his footsteps receding down the corridor. Only when they were audible no longer did somebody rise timidly, and close the door.

So that is why an Act of Parliament is still silently ignored at Kellcaster, and why from that day to this no boy in the school dare mention the word *beer*.

Now, even the ubiquitous Israelites were unequal to the task of brick-making without straw, and what they failed to accomplish, the historian, however intelligent and painstaking, must not be required to attempt. If Rope had disclosed what passed between himself and Pater Bovo the historian would be able to record it; but Rope has never opened his lips upon the subject. Accordingly nothing authentic can be written.

Circumstantial evidence, however, suggests that the interview pained Rope. This is supplied by some yellow splinters of a fibrous nature, which the housemaid swept into her dustpan from the study carpet the next day, and which the school Botanical and Field Club would have classed among the palm family called rattans (*genus Calamus*), the species whereof are distributed over the East Indies, India, Ceylon, the Malay Peninsula, China, and—in their finished form—our British schools.

To the astonishment of the school, the Birds of Freedom suddenly rose to their feet, brandishing mugs of various shapes and sizes.

For this inference (that the interview pained Rope) support is also forthcoming from a scrap of conversation which passed a few days afterwards between the sergeant and the ancient Parker. Premising that hearsay evidence must be regarded only with strict caution, and that tittle-tattle is no evidence at all, the historian who endeavours to reach the truth must not omit this dialogue. Said Parker, puckering his wizened cheeks:—

"I ask you—could I help seeing? Clearing the cloth in his dining-room, I was, what's opposite his study, as you know, colonel."

When off duty, Parker invariably promoted Sergeant Cutlack.

"In course," the latter nodded.

"So I knocks to see if I was wanted. And there was 'im a-sitting in his chair——"

"Sitting, was he, Mr. Parker?"

"A-sitting most still and awful, just looking, *looking*, colonel, at our young gentleman. You know how 'e can look when he tries!"

Reminded possibly of an afternoon when he had forgotten to lock Big School during call-over, and of the glance (it was nothing but a glance) which Pater Bovo gave him, the sergeant shivered.

"Oh, aye," he shivered. "Aye, I *know*."

"Colonel, not a word between them; but our young bantam just standing there being looked at. A rare picture of take-me-home-and-hide-me, Rope was making. For five minutes that goes on, I reckon, for I never hears no sound outside."

"And then?"

The ancient drew himself erect and extended his right arm, hand opened. Then he dropped it to his side, and copied the action with his left. This pantomime he repeated several times.

It might conceivably have been an exercise in Swedish drill, but to judge by the sergeant's chuckle it meant something else.

"Proper?" he insinuated.

"Oh, proper!" echoed Parker.

As the only data available this must be recorded, with the supplement that for many days now Rope bore himself subjected and subdued, retiring like a hermit to his cave, so that Kellcaster was scarcely conscious of him. Nor dare they twit him with his appetite for beer, for Pater Bovo's monition rang in their ears.

And every day now Penn was wondering why Pater Bovo never mentioned Rope and the beer to him. It must have been a fortnight before he did so. Then all at once, when they had been engaged together after third lesson, the old gentleman tilted a chair free of its littered papers, and motioned Penn to seat himself.

"Penn, you see those newspapers," he smiled. "Yes, the floor's the best place for them, Presently I'm going to show you something in them. But first—the lad Rope!"

"Yes, sir." Penn responded.

"His impertinence the other day was naturally upsetting to yourself. I wish that he had addressed his request to you."

"And so do I, sir," Penn replied, significantly.

"Just so," smiled Pater Bovo, "you might have dealt with him—well, shall we say, more readily. But I don't want you to think that his extraordinary antics reflect on you. Don't be chagrined into the idea that his exuberance shows you up as a weak captain. Don't think you are a failure, Penn."

"It looks so, sir," Penn answered. How Pater Bovo read a fellow's thoughts!

"To you?"

"To the school, I think, sir," Penn said, thoughtfully.

"Dennis," was the grave reply, "you are up against a harder problem than any captain of this school before you. What the school thinks now is nothing. What counts is how you handle it. How you come out of it—that counts."

Penn turned this over in his mind.

"Because," the old gentleman went on, "Rope is unlike any other new boy. We have never had a boy like him before. I am going to take you into my confidence, and tell you something which I have concealed from you because I have been waiting to observe two things: first, how Rope would frame; and next, how you would handle him. His antecedents are peculiar. His story is peculiar. His presence at Kellcaster is peculiar. Oh, very, very peculiar, Penn."

"In what way, sir?"

"I'm going to tell you," answered Pater Bovo.

The memory of that morning has been stamped upon Penn's mind. The litter on the carpet, the large picture of the Head rising heavily to close the latticed window, the hum of life outside which this so suddenly excluded, the grave atmosphere which followed—all these were often to recur to him.

"I will tell you," repeated Pater Bovo, "but I do not wish the story known in the school. It might militate against the lad if it leaked out. Maxon Rope is an American who has been a sharp thorn in his father's side."

Penn thought this very likely, and said nothing.

"An only child, Penn—spoiled. He was thrown off his balance by the loss of his mother in his early teens. He developed bumptiousness, self-will, temper; became, in short, the sort of animal you want to kick.

"Well, as soon as he was seventeen or so, they packed him off to Princeton University. In America, I must inform you, boys proceed to the University at an earlier age than they do here. Indeed, in many respects, such as the dormitory and class system, the American Universities resemble our public schools."

Penn remembered reading something of this sort.

"Ah," the old gentleman continued, drily, "Princeton is an admirable institution, Penn. Its gymnasium is a noble building, and Blair and Nassau Halls make charming vistas. A capital institution Princeton, yes—but it couldn't do anything with Maxon Rope.

"He proved too much altogether for poor Princeton—so they got rid of him."

"Sir, how long was he there?"

"One term," said Pater Bovo, smiling. "Then followed—ah—an interval; and then came an appeal to me from the lad's poor father, who is a dear friend of mine, and once laid me under a lasting obligation. So when he wrote to me in his sore trouble, and since the circumstances of the—ah—interval assisted, I agreed to take the boy here for a term on certain conditions.

"I agreed to knock some sense of order into him, for he has reached a critical age, Penn, and all his future seems in jeopardy. He has been developing into a waster; he might reach something worse. 'Could I help him,' his father begged. 'At Kellcaster,' I answered, 'we'll do our best.'"

With this the smile returned to the firm lips.

"Penn, it's rather odd that when your brother Jim turned up last term he found me pondering over my old friend's letter. His appearance coincided curiously. For the same post had brought the news that Norton would not return. So the last of all my Penns was to be captain—and faced with Rope."

Penn looked puzzled.

"I felt a little sorry for you, Dennis; and I hinted something of my anxiety to your brother. Rope had proved too hard a nut for Princeton to crack; I was wondering what sort of a nut-cracker you'd make."

Penn was not pitying himself; but it did occur to him that Norton had had the luck; and in the main he wished Rope at the bottom of the sea.

"Heart and soul, Dennis, I want to help the boy's father, who has given me a free hand to make or break him. Naturally, too, I wish to save the boy," Pater Bovo's voice sank earnestly. "But also I approach the problem scientifically. I believe, Dennis, in our public schools. I have lived long enough to smile at superficials; and I know, despite the grumbles of the cranks, that the public-school system pulses with as wholesome blood as ever. I believe it is the life blood to keep the land strong and healthy against the epidemic of the age. Have you thought what that is, Penn?"

"No, sir," Penn replied.

"I take that epidemic," Pater Bovo went on, incisively, "to be the cult of mean ideals: the spirit of mere money-making, the drift to irreverence and loss of faith, the scorn of holy things."

He paused, and the room seemed very quiet. There was repose and rest in it. And Penn was sensing something of the secret which retained that large and venerable figure as the most potent and active human influence in the lives of old Kellcastrians the world over.

"Faith, loyalty, sincerity, and character—these matter more than money, Penn, and always will. But the times incline to teach the contrary. I have heard a theatre rock with laughter when a stage soldier has declared that he lagged behind and hid himself in action! That symbolises much of modern aspects. Self-interest, material prosperity, the get-on-or-get-out creed—our publicists push these down every throat. Yes, but self-interest never gave its life for country's sake."

Pater Bovo started, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah, but where was I?" he smiled. "Oh, yes, I was saying that I believe our public schools still keep alive the greatest driving force in mankind's progress, which is the ideal of duty and self-sacrifice. In experiment I fancied that this old Kellcaster of ours, Penn, might manage to make something yet of Rope. I was curious, if you care to put it so, to ascertain. And I felt sure that by turning a cub into a decent person we should score a triumph, not unworthy, for the system."

He stopped, and took one of the papers from the floor.

"Some wiseacres, you know, Penn, decry our public schools. A few are constantly writing to the newspapers to say so. Every now and then, in the slack season, a lively correspondence is let loose upon the subject. One has been

running for the last few days now in the *Daily World*."

Having found the place he sought for in the paper, he folded it and handed it to Penn.

"There, read the letters in this morning's," he observed; "they may amuse you. Note that last one, at the bottom of the column there, signed 'Another Parent.' Mark how he sneers at our dead languages, our waste of time upon athletics, our inability, in his words, to march abreast with modern requirements. A loose expression that, Penn, which looks formidable in print. But what are 'modern requirements' in a boy? Are they manliness and duty, as they were when I was young—or fluent German?"

Reading the querulous effusions, Penn could not wonder that they stirred the anger of one who had never stooped by deed or word to anything that was small, or hidden, or unmanly.

There was nothing novel in the letters. Their facsimiles may be found periodically in the Press: little complaints on which the whole system is indicted; some marked by ignorance, and some by bitterness. The plaint of little imperfections—in a world where no perfection is! Molehills magnified to mountains. The blemish argued into malformation. As the mad physician might take a healthy patient and declare him doomed because he grew a wart.

Penn had read such letters before, and laughed at them. He determined to get the next few issues of the *Daily World* for the amusement of himself and Musgrave.

"They're funny, sir," he smiled. "The correspondence will be kept up for a few days, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, as long as the editor finds his readers interested. Till a new topic comes along."

"I should like to follow it up, sir."

"You would? Well, you can have my copy every evening, Penn. You'll destroy it afterwards!"

Penn thanked him.

"What annoys me, Penn, is this: A weekly journal of the sensational type, very widely circulated, announces its intention of starting a series of articles upon the subject. It will thrash it out, it declares—pretentious creature. 'Are Our Public Schools a Failure?' that's the riddle it's going to read for us——"

"Not entirely grammatical, sir."

"Oh, no. You must not look for grammar in such judges. Well, its 'Special Commissioner,' as it calls the fellow, is on a tour, or so it says, of investigation." Pater Bovo ceased, and now laughed heartily. "I wonder if he'll come here, Penn?"

"If he does," Penn smiled, "I pity him."

Pater Bovo made a gesture of profound disgust.

"Special articles by a Special Wiseacre from Fleet Street," he ejaculated, "to dissect in half an hour the work of centuries! Penn, it's ludicrous. Forget it.

"But I want you to know," he went on, after a pause, "the two conditions under which I assented to take Rope. One is that while he is with me no letters shall pass between his father and himself. I wish to cut him off entirely from his old life, Dennis.

"And the second, that Rope must drop one word from his name. He was christened Maxon and he was christened Rope; but the latter is not his surname. These, you understand, are Christian names. His surname I have discarded."

"But, sir——"

"You can't see why? Well, naturally. But you will, Penn, when the story's finished. Its strangest feature I am coming to. I alluded just now to an interval."

"Yes, after Princeton. An interval, you said, sir."

"Just so. The interval directly preceded his arrival here. It was spent in England."

"Then he didn't come straight from America to Kellcaster?"

"He did not, Penn. He was between seventeen and eighteen when Princeton expelled him, and nothing would satisfy him then but his father must send him to an English university. He bullied the poor old gentleman into it. So he was provided with money, and somehow or other he managed to squeeze into Cambridge. He was admitted to a college. He stayed one term."

Penn sat very still. He was assailed with a queer feeling that he had expected this. His habit of thinking before speaking saved him from uttering the words upon his tongue.

"Rope stayed one term at Cambridge, Penn. He rioted and exhausted all his money. It had been a large sum. But when he cabled his father for more, the old gentleman realised his mistake, and it was then he wrote and begged my aid. On my advice Rope's funds were stopped, and the boy was told quite bluntly that he would be left to starve or fend for himself unless he came to Kellcaster and me. He had no money. He was bound to take this offer. And I have no doubt either that the spirit of bravado rose in him. So Cambridge lost him and we found him, Penn."

"Very much so," Penn mentally responded.

"Here, you see, I keep him on the chain. His father has provided me with ample funds for him, and now and then I give him a few shillings. His wings are clipped, you see."

"Yes, sir," Penn said, numbly

"It was advisable, however, that he should not be known here by the name he had disgraced at Princeton and in Cambridge. Best, too, in his own interests to give him a new start. So Maxon Rope Spalding——"

Penn started, echoing the name beneath his breath Spalding! He had known it would be Spalding!

"Yes, Spalding, Penn. Maxon Rope Spalding becomes Maxon Rope; and there you have the essential facts, I think."

"Sir, what college was he at?"

"Oddly enough, Penn, at your brother's; though he tells me that he never met Jim there. You see, Rope was a by-termer and in college, who never went to lectures and joined no games. Your brother was out of coll. that term."

"Yes, sir," Penn said, wincing.

"Not only the best interests of Rope himself, but motives of broader policy prompt me to have nothing known of this. As you can judge for yourself from the correspondence in the *Daily World* there are many people who take short-sighted views, and it occurs to me upon consideration that if it were published that we had accepted a renegade from two universities the school might suffer a little—ah—superficial harm. Kellcaster will do well for Rope. Rope will live, perhaps, to do well for Kellcaster; but while he is in the furnace, so to speak, it might not help us if it became known."

"Sir, I shall tell no one."

"I know, I know, Penn. I've given you my ideas because I wish you fully to understand them. I think that fair to you."

"And you really think, sir——"

"That publication would hurt the school? I have no doubt of it," sighed Pater Bovo. "Penn, the world is full of very silly people."

"I understand," said Penn.

"I'm sure," smiled Pater Bovo, "that you do."

CHAPTER XV

GAGE ASKS SOME FRIENDS TO TEA

WITH a teapot in one hand and in the other its lid, Gage posed upon Rope's hearthrug, and benevolently surveyed the company. It goes without saying that his eyes rested on Ellis, and that the Maggot, Simpson Mi, and Willett completed the quintette.

Gage looked benevolent, because they were his guests. He had, in fact, invited them to tea Nor did he suffer any uneasiness from the circumstance that he had asked them there not only without the permission, but also without the knowledge, of the room's proprietor.

As luck would have it, the school's engagement in an out-match had coincided with his receipt that morning of a postal order. Now postal orders were very rare with Gage, and when they did arrive they must be celebrated What better opportunity, he told himself, than when the school Eleven was away?

For its absence meant the absence of the Upper School in flocks; it meant also, as he soon discovered, the involuntary absence of Maxon Rope, who had trailed off willy-nilly to watch—at a hint, as it was rumoured, from headquarters.

And when Gage saw Rope departing with the rest he lost no time in issuing his invitations. He scrawled these at hazard during third lesson upon some pages of his Latin primer, and conveyed them to their recipients in the shape of pellets.

"In tucker?" Willett had scribbled back.

"No. In Rope's study," was the answer by dumb alphabet.

So here was Gage upon the hearthrug, his sense of hospitality surrendering the basket chair to Ellis.

"One for each person, one for the pot, and three for luck," he said. "Simpson, ladle out nine spoonfuls, and buck up!"

"But it's Rope's tea," murmured Simpson "It isn't right."

Rather loftily, Gage indicated a sixpence on the mantelpiece.

"I've plunked that there," he said, "to pay him for it. So buck up!"

There was nothing niggardly about Gage's preparations. To the last penny his postal order had been melted, and the fruits thereof were lying lusciously before them. Upon the duster on the table a glass tongue overtowered a tin of Swiss milk, which dwarfed in its turn three flat tins of sardines, and mounted guard as well upon a seed cake, a Madeira cake, much pastry, and a jar of pineapple chunks. Gage had thought of everything—but bread and butter.

Stay, one thing more he had forgotten, only to recall it when the tea had been spooned out.

"I say!" he cried. "We haven't any hot water!"

Hot water! A rummage in the cupboard having revealed no traces of a spirit-lamp, it was put to the meeting and carried with one dissentient that Simpson go and fetch a jugful from the tucker.

"But," urged the dissentient, "I shall get caught for cutting cricket. Besides, one jug won't be enough!"

"Then fetch two," Gage commanded.

"And I'll be seen with them!" whined Simpson. "And they'll ask me where I'm taking them."

"And if they do?"

"I can't cram about it," Simpson replied, piously. "I must say that I'm bringing the water here. And then——"

"Yes, then," Gage prompted him.

"We'll get into a row, Gage, for nabbing old Rope's study!"

"In other words," said Gage, "you're too lazy to fetch it." He pointed to the table, and afterwards to the door. "All right, young Simpson, just you take your choice. Unless you fetch the water, you get no tea. So there!"

"So there!" echoed the others.

The virtuous eyes of Simpson had been resting fondly on the chunks of pineapple, and now he raised them in pitiable distress to Gage.

"Look here, Gage," he exclaimed, earnestly, "if I fetch the hot water, you won't begin upon the grub till I come back? You promise you won't, you fellows?"

"All right," said Gage. "But mind you bring two jugs full."

Off went Simpson with an alacrity that betrayed his real reason for hanging back, and Ellis began to open the sardine-tins. This he accomplished with the aid of a rather pretty paper-knife of Rope's which snapped short at the conclusion of the operation. But when inserting a finger and thumb, about to sample one of the plump upper layer, Gage pounced upon his wrist and held it.

"No," he cried; "we promised not to begin without Simpson."

"But only one? To see if they're all right, you know!"

"Just one!" pleaded Willett and the Maggot.

Their host, however, was adamant; but it was hard work waiting for the return of Simpson Minor. For the chunks were open now, as was also the big tongue, with Gage's jack-knife all ready for the carving of it. The Swiss milk would be kept till last, to be sucked through a hole punched in the tin—which is the only way of absolutely enjoying it.

But where *was* Simpson? He'd had time to go half a dozen times to the tucker and back.

"He's funked it!" groaned the Maggot. "I bet he has."

Willett laughed contemptuously.

"The little pig's too keen for that," he said "I vote one of us goes out to find him."

This seemed quite a sound suggestion, but when its proposer made no move to make his words good they stared at him, and inquired what he waited for.

"I said 'one of us,'" he murmured. "We'll draw lots."

"But Gage is in the chair," cried Ellis. "And I'm helping him."

"Well?"

"So you and the Maggot must toss up who goes."

"But you proposed it!" expostulated the poet.

Then Willett hesitated, even as Simpson had done.

"Well, if I go and fetch the beastly water," he said, slowly, "you chaps will promise to wait—as you promised Simpson? Gage, you won't let Moorgate lap up all the sardines."

For he knew the poet's capacity for that delicacy, and the knowledge gave him qualms.

Gage took him by the shoulders and thrust him towards the door. "Look here, Willett, we won't touch a single thing," he cried. "I vow we won't."

"Not even if Simpson comes back first?"

"We'll wait for you," Gage promised. "Bring two jugs full."

"And mind it's boiling!" the Maggot bellowed after.

Three waiting now before the tempting table, and all desperately hungry. Still, Willett couldn't be more than five minutes at the most—but suppose the tucker had no hot water left!

"Well, tea with cold water isn't so bad, you know," Gage ventured, cheerfully.

"And, anyhow," said Ellis, "there's the grub."

The ten minutes they spent in eyeing the table seemed ten hours, till at last the Maggot's feelings got the better of him. "I can't stand this," he groaned, "I'm going to fetch that jolly water myself." And with a pathetic glance at the sardines he fled.

When they had been alone for five minutes Ellis rose and eyed his host intently, to receive in answer an austere shake of the head.

THE LAST OF HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

"Not one sardine," he murmured under his breath—"to try them?"

"Not one," was the reply.

"Not a three-quarter, even?"

"Nothing," said Gage, decisively.

The clock ticked on—and a sense of vague alarm possessed them. What had happened to Simpson, Willett, and the Maggot? It was a rum thing, very, that not one of them had returned!

"I don't like it," said Gage; "it's too mysterious."

"And I'm so beastly peckish," muttered Ellis.

"Do you think, Ellis, anybody knows we're in Rope's study?"

"By anybody, do you mean old Pieface?"

At this possible solution their faces fell. For "old Pieface" (known on the school's roll as Pyman Major) was prefect of this very corridor, and they had reason to assess themselves in his black books. In their resentment of their P. and F.'s decree of banishment, they had attempted more than once to rag his study, and recalled how last time old Pieface had surprised them. "If ever I catch you near this place again——" he had begun; and left it there, significantly.

Other items also they remembered in these moments of suspense. House regulations disregarded, each little in itself, but in the aggregate a sum of trespass which had not raised them in Pieface's esteem. No wonder that his name pursed Ellis's lips with an expression that was anything but cheerful.

"But he's safe at the match," cried Gage at last.

"He wasn't playing."

"No; but he'd be sure to go with all the other fellows!"

"Then what *is* up? Why don't they return?"

To answer this vexed and mysterious problem, it is necessary to put the ticking clock back, and to see how it has fared with Simpson Minor. He set forth, you remember, with alacrity, and bolted so fast round the far corner of the corridor that he ran plump into a complacent, overfed youth with three companions. This youth was the same Parsons whose offer of tuck had been so contemptuously scorned last term by Gage, who had been accused of "sucking up" on that occasion; and who had resented the charge ever since, because he knew he deserved it.

His knife, as he expressed it, was into Gage and Ellis, and also into the trio who hunted with them.

Plump into Parsons, Simpson Minor ran, wherefore the former caught him by the waist and angrily demanded what he meant by it. His three companions seconded the demand.

Simpson Minor pleaded that he was busy, and confided, under pressure, that he was going to tucker.

"What for?"

"To get hot water."

Now Simpson Minor did his best to frame the words quite innocently; to suggest, of course, that the carriage of hot water was a normal pursuit in which they might expect him to be engaged. And when Parsons said, "For Pieface?" he nodded vaguely.

The nod was a half-nod, a sop to the pious Simpson's conscience; he wasn't going to fib by saying "Yes"; he was horribly afraid of saying "No." He had better have refused to answer anything.

"Then that's a lie," cried Parsons, "for you're not! Old Pieface isn't here. He's at the match"

"Oh, *is* he?" Simpson tried to retort sarcastically, attempting to convey that he knew better. "You chaps had better let me go, I tell you!"

"When you tell us where the water's for," said Parsons.

"Well, then," said Simpson, defiantly, "it's for Gage."

Then did one of them recall how he had seen Gage change a postal order that morning, and, assailed by a suspicion of the truth, he retaliated by assailing Simpson. In a body they fell on the poor emissary, and when he lay spread-eagled, with two knees on either arm and Parsons straddling his virtuous breast, he confessed that he was "only fetching hot water" because Gage was "only giving a tea party in Rope's study." He proceeded, under pressure, to name every edible upon the table.

The wits of Parsons and his friends were sharpened With Simpson *hors de combat*, it seemed obvious that somebody else would come for the hot water; remove him also, and you whittled the feasters down. Four in the study was too large a handful to tackle, but three might be assaulted with fair prospects. "And suppose," forecasted someone, "we collared a couple more."

The speaker ran off to the lavatories, and returned with two long towels. They lashed one skilfully round Simpson's ankles; with the other his elbows were tight trussed. Last vac., Parsons had attended an ambulance class, and he knew exactly how to do these things.

Then they propped their captive against the wall.

Barely had this good job been accomplished than the banging of a distant door was heard, and quick footsteps came approaching down the corridor. From their corner they leaped out on Willett as he turned it—and one can't master four in a rough and tumble.

"You'd better leave me alone!" he panted, gallantly. "I'm fagging, I tell you. It's awfully important."

"Yes, we know it is," they cried, and pointed to Simpson. "We know all about that, Willett, old man."

Another dash to the lavatories brought two lusty reinforcements, who, when the joke was explained to them, entered into it with heart and hand. It also brought *four* towels this time, whereof two were needed for Willett before he went down with his flag flying. Beside the indignant Simpson they flung him spluttering—which left two towels for the next upon the scene.

"We'll give him a few minutes," declared their valiant leader. "If he doesn't come then, we're six of us—we can risk it."

Alas! for the brave poet. No muse of all he courted whispered to save him from the ambush as he came. He was into it and on his back within five seconds, nor had the guard over his two trussed companions any difficulty in preventing them from stirring to his rescue. You had only to push them and they toppled over.

"And now," said Parsons, when the fell work was accomplished, "we'll shut these three up in the boot-hole. And then, my merry men, for tea with Gage!"

"You won't have any hot water, you beast!" moaned Simpson.

Now the Persian Lambs grew hungrier and hungrier, and for the twentieth time were wondering what was up, when someone tapped softly on the door, and Ellis, shouting joyously, sprang up. Here was one of the three back, at any rate—unable to open the door for himself, of course; because, you know, his hands were full of jugs.

"All right!" cried Ellis. "Don't you drop the water!"

He and the door seemed to reach each other simultaneously; *it* bumped his nose at least, as *his* hand stretched for the knob—and through the gap an avalanche descended.

With a general's eye for the key to the position, Parsons made a bee-line for the Swiss milk and the tongue. The idea was to grab the grub and out again, for so it could be eaten in more comfort than while engaged in combat with its owners. Following this strategy, the other raiders each rushed for some booty; and secured it to find that Gage had nipped behind them. With a presence of mind that marked him Parsons' master, he locked the door, and cut off their retreat.

"Now, drop those things!" he cried, ferociously.

"Yes, drop them!" glared Ellis, rubbing his sore nose.

The six laughed, fingering the spoils. So Ellis ducked, and raised the basket chair. He held it as a battering-ram, and rushed at them.

The old chair creaked and groaned, but it swept their leader's feet from underneath him; he clutched his diaphragm, he gasped, and dropped the tongue. Quick as lightning, Gage secured and pocketed it, while the basket chair mowed on its deadly way.

Then Ellis dropped it, and the Persian Lambs plunged into the fray together. The air was dark (or might have been) with missiles, as sardines and chunks of pineapple flew right and left, which, when they missed a face, plopped into a picture. You would scarce have recognised Rope's study presently, and found some difficulty in distinguishing its guests. The Persian Lambs had lost their tea—but Parsons was as far as ever from gaining it.

His sole success was to secure the contents of the Swiss milk tin, ejected with a splush into his face. Next Gage anointed him with juice of pineapple, and the others were discreetly about to retire, when a noise more violent than any startled all, and awoke them to the fact that somebody outside was hammering.

"Open this door!" they heard in irate tones.

The voice was the voice of Pyman, and might not be disobeyed. Releasing Parsons, Gage drew the key from his pocket—and enter Pyman.

"It's a good thing," he observed, as he surveyed them coldly, "that I came home before the other men. And now, pray, what does all this mean?"

Whatever explanations were delivered, they failed signally to appease the prefect's wrath.

"With you," he said to Parsons and his five, "I'll deal at once. Gage and Ellis, I shall report you both to Penn."

"Please, Pyman——" began the Persian Lambs.

But he was stalking off already, in the wake of him a sad and silent party.

Then and then only did Gage withdraw a sticky hand from his pocket.

"Well, anyhow," he whispered, "I've saved the tongue."

So it fell after prep. that evening that the two stood side by side upon Penn's mat, each trying furtively to "spot" a certain ash stick of which some fables ran in Kellcaster. But they saw nothing on the table except a tattered lexicon and several books, with two newspapers flung carelessly beside them, and a certain popular weekly which lay open at a page marked with blue pencil. This so much pricked the curiosity of Gage that he edged a trifle nearer, to discover what the marked page was about. He was able to decipher only a few words in large type. One was SCHOOLS, and underneath it —OUR SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.

To their amazement, Penn had seated himself without seeking his cupboards. Stick generally lived in cupboards, as they knew.

Ellis raised the chair, and, holding it before him, rushed at the raiders, whose leader was swept off his feet.

"Now," he began, sharply, "Pyman tells me you two have given him a lot of trouble lately."

The guilty pair found nothing to say to this.

"And what do you mean by inviting people to Rope's study?"

"We thought," they murmured, "that it wouldn't matter."

"But it's not your study, you know."

"He promised us it should be, please," Gage ventured.

A queer smile crossed the captain's mouth.

"I suppose you did it as a sort of score off Rope?"

They nodded bashfully.

"And I'm told you've made a fearful mess of the place?"

They tried to look astonished at such rumours.

Penn smiled again, and the smile woke a wild thought in them both. Of course, the captain hated Maxon Rope. Hadn't Rope always tried to pile it up for him? Could he actually be going to let them off this time because they'd got one back, as it were, on Rope? Gage thought it looked like it, and so did Ellis.

Alas! for visions of such rosy hue. Penn's next words scattered them as autumn scatters the leaves.

"I won't have you ragging Rope," he said. "What's more, you won't go near his study again. And for the rest of the term you're confined strictly to bounds; you won't leave the grounds on any excuse whatever, mind. You understand?"

Two faded voices assented. They "understood."

"But you didn't," Penn said, drily, "get your fine tea after all?"

"No," murmured the Persian Lambs.

"Well, that comes, you see, from going where you shouldn't be. You missed your house tea, too, I think—you were repairing damage?"

"Yes, Penn—I mean, no. We got no tea of any sort," Gage mumbled, desperately.

"Saved anything from the wreck?"

"Only a tongue, please, Penn. It's in my pocket."

"Ah!" Penn rose and stretched himself, and crossed thoughtfully to his cupboard,

while the Persian Lambs exchanged apprehensive glances. Now for it! He was going to whack them as well as keep them in!

They watched him stoop and grope—but what was this he rose with? It certainly was anything but a stick. It looked remarkably like a biscuit-tin.

"You two," he said, "are generally pretty hungry. Dry biscuits go quite all right with tongue. There, help yourselves."

But, for all that, the tin might have been a stick from the fashion in which Gage advanced to take it. Then each of them extracted one biscuit, very gingerly; before returning with the box to Penn.

"Please, thank you; thank you frightfully," they murmured.

With a laugh that made them wonder if they dreamed, Penn thrust the tin into their hands again.

"Help yourselves properly," he commanded. "They're not poisoned."

Gage took two more biscuits. Ellis also.

"Properly," repeated Penn. "You duffers, fill your pockets."

He was eyeing them up and down while they obeyed, till at last, when the tin was visibly depleted, he remarked:—

"Rope may be a fine fellow, with a moustache and all the rest of it, but he's not exactly the model for little boys. Remember, all he preaches isn't fact."

The miracle of the biscuits must have turned their heads, for now Gage, forgetful of the august presence in which he stood, ejaculated, "No, it's tommy rot," while Ellis followed to cite chapter and verse.

"For one thing, please," he blurted out, "Rope used to pretend that studies should be common property. But when he got one and we tried to use it, he booted us!"

"Then that's all right," Penn smiled. "And by the way, next time I come across you in a corridor, don't look, if you can help it, like two convicts. Use your tongues more in answering your seniors when you're spoken to——"

"Yes, Penn."

"And less in chattering nonsense with Maxon Rope. Now trek."

Not a word they spoke as they pattered off to the dormitory; but there Gage dropped dramatically upon his bed and stared at Ellis with a face of blank surprise.

"By jingo!" he whispered. "I thought that he was going to slaughter us!"

"And so did I!" said Ellis.

There was a moment's silence, while Gage released the tongue.

"And all the time," he said, wiping his fingers, "all the time, Ellis, we've been taking him for a beast."

"Who—Penn? Yes," stammered Ellis.

"But he's decent!"

"Rather!—yes."

"And in future I'm going to back him up."

"And so am I," said Ellis; "frightfully."

Then they fell-to upon the tongue and biscuits.

CHAPTER XV

COMING TO GRIPS

THE subject of their judgment in the meantime had locked up the newspapers and the weekly journal, and his eyes were hardening as his mind reverted to Rope, as time and time it had done since Pater Bovo's revelation had disclosed that Rope and Spalding were identical. And always Penn reviewed the situation in the light of his brother's trouble.

To think that the unscrupulous feather-brain who had plunged old Jim indirectly into his mess had all the time been lying *perdu* here! Here, under his own hand at Kellcaster! And to think that Pater Bovo by revealing who Rope was had furnished him with the means to save old Jim! More than once the latter had written recently that no prospect existed of taking-up the bills, that he saw nothing but confession and disgrace. "I'll be rusticated for a cert," ran his laments. "A nice disgrace for the family and Kellcaster!"

Penn's first impulse on leaving the Head with his discovery had been to write and tell his brother everything. But his natural caution intervened. First, he had decided, he must put it straight with Rope. Then he could disclose the arrangement to old Jim.

For, of course, it would have to be settled with diplomacy. It wasn't as easy as it looked by long chalks. The more you studied it, the harder it seemed.

Rope must get the money from Pater Bovo, but Pater Bovo must not be told why. ("It would upset the old man too much!" thought Penn.) Then Rope must go up to Cambridge (with somebody to look after him, of course!), pay Pepperdine, and get the bills back in exchange. But he must not let out to Pepperdine that he came from Kellcaster.

Involuntarily, Penn glanced at the drawer in

which the newspapers were locked. No, on no account must Rope bring in the school's name. What would the busybodies, as Pater Bovo called them, say if it leaked out that a Kellcaster boy had been breaking horse's knees at Cambridge and running away? What a find the fact would be, by Jove! for all those writers to the papers! And how "Our Special Commissioner" would jump at it!

For the honour of the school the story must not leak out. For the honour of the Penns, Rope must up and find the money. Yet how to insure the latter without jeopardising the former? Here was the crux that had been worrying him.

But it *was* to be arranged? Oh, surely. Surely he and Rope could manage it between them. So, after all, the most serious part, perhaps, was how to work it for the best of everybody.

In his keen, reflective manner Penn had thought a good deal about Rope's character, and he leaned to the opinion that his cussedness was due more to high spirits than to any vice. True, at Princeton he had kicked over the traces, and at Cambridge he had certainly made things hum—but many men had done as much, and turned out eventually no worse for it. And Rope's behaviour at Kellcaster was more intelligible now; in a measure, Penn could even sympathise with him. A man who has been at two Universities (if only for a term at each), and in the bargain an American, was unlikely to knuckle under all at once to the restrictions of a public school! Yes, there were excuses he could make for Rope.

But what excuse for the fellow's beastly trick on Pepperdine? None, none whatever. Not a jot of an excuse for that

He had reached this stage in his meditations when it occurred to him to clinch the matter now. He would see Rope before he went to bed, and have it out.

Acting upon the heels of his resolve, he strode out of his study and into Rope's. The latter looked surprised at his appearance, but received him with that air of suppressed defiance which he had worn since his acquaintance with the ash-stick. He had never forgotten the humiliation of that day.

"Well?" he growled, as Penn drew the door fast.

"Maxon Rope Spalding," came the abrupt reply, "what do you mean to do about Pepperdine's horse?"

The words brought the American to his feet, and his manner changed from surliness to an alert attention. But he wasted no time on pretences.

"So the Head's told you," he drawled.

"That your name's Spalding, and that you came from St. Saviour's."

"Does *he* know about Pepperdine's gee?"

"He doesn't," Penn said, curtly.

"Then how do *you* know?" Rope cried, upon his guard.

"From my brother."

"How?"

Penn told the story briefly, concluding with the trouble over the bill. He was surprised when he had finished to see how much easier Rope looked.

"But the Head? You're sure *he* doesn't know about the horse?"

"I've said so once," Penn answered.

"Your brother hasn't told him?"

"He wouldn't. Jim doesn't even know yet that you are Spalding."

"You're sure?"

"Certain."

"Then where do *I* come in?"

Rope put this so quietly and naturally, with such a dry smile of amusement, that Penn was thrown for a moment off his balance of restraint.

"You hound!" he cried. "You've got to make the damage good. You've got to pay for it!"

"Oh, no, I don't," laughed Rope.

"I'll make you!"

"I haven't any money."

"But the Head has some of yours."

"He told you that as well?"

"He told me everything," said Penn, recovering his self-control. "And, Rope, what you and I have got to fix up is the best way to arrange it. You'll have to go to Cambridge, see Pepperdine, settle it; but not let out that you're at Kellcaster now."

Rope caught him up sharply on the last words.

"Eh—tell me that again," he said.

"You mustn't let him know you're now at Kellcaster."

"Why?"

"Briefly, because it would do the school no good."

"I see," Rope drawled, in a queer voice. "I see, Penn."

"I knew you would."

"But I don't see myself going to old Pepperdine, or venturing back to Cambridge, for that matter; or finding any money."

"You don't follow me," said Penn. "Unless the bill's redeemed, my brother will be sent down from the 'Varsity—for a term, at any rate."

"Why?"

"Because he took a horse out when he was gated. Pepperdine discovered that. He's going to tell the tutor if Jim doesn't pay."

"But that," Rope answered, slyly, "isn't my fault. I'm not to blame if your josser of a brother broke his gate. If he's fired it's his own look-out."

Penn's reply came slowly, for he kept a strong curb on his anger.

"Rope, you're at the bottom of it. Your behaviour to Pepperdine started the whole business. If you hadn't played old Harry——"

"Cut out the comedy," sneered Rope. "I'm not to be jossed, Penn. Your brother's got his neck in; he'll have to get it out—I won't."

"I'll make you," Penn repeated.

"Then try it. Shall I tell you really why I won't?"

Rope leaned across the table; and now his eyes were blazing with vindictiveness, his words came passionately:—

"I won't because you licked me that day, Penn. By gosh, I said you'd rue it, and now you shall! I won't own up. I won't do anything. How's that?"

"I'll make you," Penn repeated, frigidly.

"You can't."

Rope's manner changed. He began to laugh in an immoderate, high key; showing his white teeth. Then he dropped into a chair, and squinted round the room through half-closed eyes. Penn was reminded of the malicious little Burmese god, which some Old Boy had given to the school museum. It always suggested the potency of evil—as Rope did, in that attitude.

"Penn, you can't make me," he said.

"Of course I can."

"Then how?"

"That's my business," Penn answered, with his mind on Pater Bovo. But he knew how it would go against the grain to fall back on such assistance, and how the whole thing would upset that benign old gentleman.

"If Pater Bovo," he was thinking, "should ever know the trouble Rope's brewed for Jim, he'd feel he'd been at fault in taking Rope. Jolly sick he'd be."

So far his mind: his tongue said nothing. But Rope guessed what he was thinking, as his next words showed.

"You can't tell Mr. Bullock. And if you do, he can only fire me."

"And make you pay."

"Oh, perhaps. But fire me he must, for fear of what I might get up to next! And think, Penn—if he fired me he'd have to own up to my pater that he'd failed. A nice pill that for the pride of the Reverend John."

"Don't speak of him like that," rapped Penn, stung by the sneering tones, and realising, as all along he had, the force and craft of the American's contention. If Pater Bovo knew, he would allow no personal considerations to stand between old Jim and justice, between Rope and the penalty. But at what cost to his feelings!

"Naturally, Rope, I want to spare the Head——"

"Of course, most model creature."

Penn almost sprang at him.

"You hound! You're going to set the matter right," he cried. "And jolly soon."

"Oh, am I?" mimicked Rope, though his face was paling, too, with rage. "I'm not, I tell you. I don't raise a finger. *You* can't make me!"

"Oh, yes, I can," said Penn.

"You can't," Rope answered, fumbling with a paper in his pocket. "There! Read that!" he added, and banged it on the table. "It's to-day's issue of the *Daily World*. You haven't seen it yet, Bonehead!"

He flung the epithet out contemptuously, and waited for Penn to pick the newspaper up.

"Penn, when you've read that piece I've marked," he continued, "you'll josh no longer about forcing me."

"So you know about the correspondence?" Penn said, curtly.

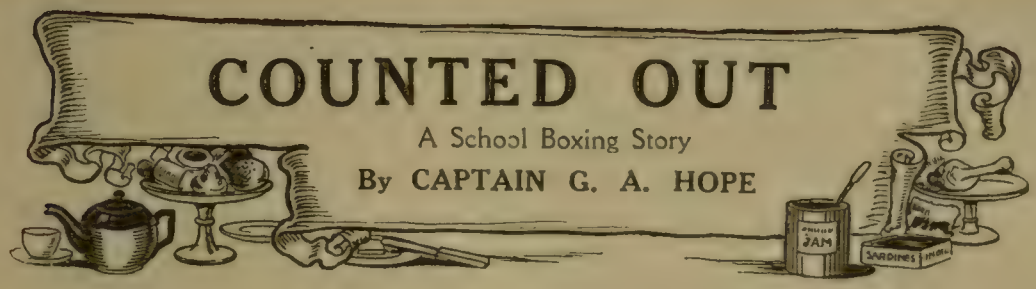
"Say! Do you think I'm blind? Read that one."

"Bah! Only the same old thing!"

Rope jabbed his finger on the place.

"When you've read *that*," he said, incisively, "and when you've read the leading article, Penn, you'll sing, I reckon, a very different tune. You won't talk of dragging me in then. Not you, my son. You read it!"

(*To be continued*)



COUNTED OUT

A School Boxing Story

By CAPTAIN G. A. HOPE

I

THE scene is Telson's, the period the beginning of the Easter term, and the time 4.30 p.m., the hour of brew. The rooms were full, but we are not concerned with any of its occupants but three, two of whom wore fifteen colours, while the third wore the red and blue of the cricket twenty-two. Great men, all of them, you see, and, as such, were discussing high affairs of state—nothing less than the probability of being able to send a full team of boxers, one for each class, to Aldershot at the end of the term.

"So, you see," said Martyn, who had the matter in his charge, "we've got men to spare for each class. It'll be a record."

"What about the heavies?" said Ray, the twenty-two man.

"That's up to you and Jepson," replied Martyn. "You must get the Gorilla on the job."

The Gorilla—Johnstone on the school books—was in the same house as Ray and Jepson.

"What do you want to get the Gorilla on the job for?" said a new comer in a black, blue, and white cap, denoting that he was in both eleven and fifteen. "A bun-eating competition?"

The other three looked up, and did not seem best pleased at the new arrival.

"Hullo, Hunt!" said Ray. "Didn't know you ever honoured Telson's with your presence."

"Oh, I come occasionally," replied Hunt. "But what's this about the Gorilla?"

"Heavies for Aldershot," replied Martyn. "If we can get him to fight, we'll have a man for every class. He won the light-weights there, four years ago, when he was a kid."

"Since when he has put in all his time slacking and brewing," said Hunt, contemptuously. "It's no good thinking of him, Martyn. He's too jolly lazy to do anything for the school."

"He's in the fifteen, anyhow," said Ray.

"Yes, one needs a lump to shove sometimes," said Hunt, who had a wholesome contempt for slackers, and considered Johnstone the prince of the tribe. "I wouldn't send him to Aldershot if I were you, Martyn. He'll only make an exhibition of himself."

"But I must have a heavy-weight."

"If you're so jolly keen, I'll get the gym sergeant to teach me," replied Hunt. "I'm heavy enough, and I've often thought of taking up boxing."

Boxing was about the only thing Hunt had not taken up. He was in the fifteen, and cricket and hockey elevens, had won the athletic championship twice running, and was expected to win it again that term. He was also a prefect, in the Upper Sixth, and took scholarships and prizes as a sort of recreation in his spare time.

"You won't make much of a show yourself," remarked Jepson, rather acidly, "if you've never boxed before. Have you?"

"No, never," said Hunt. "But I can fence and do a bit of wrestling."

"Have you the carpenter's wife's sister's hat?" said Ray, addressing no one in particular. "No, but my brother plays the B flat trombone, and my housemaid's brother has a bradawl."

But Hunt only laughed.

"There's more connection than you think," he said, and with truth up to a point. "I'll have a shot at it at all events. Anyhow, it's no use relying on the Gorilla."

"Conceited beast!" said Ray, as he and Jepson left a little later to go back to house. "He thinks he can do everything. The Gorilla simply has got to fight."

"It's no good," said Jepson, with gloom. "He won't do anything out of the footer term. I can't even get him to play hockey."

"Then we'll jolly well make his life a burden to him till he does buck up," said Ray, with decision, "and we'll begin now."

It was easy to say they were going to rouse the Gorilla from his normal sloth, but, when it came to the point, Ray and Jepson found the task as profitable as trying to arouse enthusiasm

in a statue. The Gorilla was a huge, enormously powerful youth, a tower of strength in the school scrum, for all Hunt's sarcasms, and had been noticed four years before as the best of all the school boxers at Aldershot. But, like most overgrown, powerful young men, he was invincibly lazy, and also good natured and easy-going to a fault. Insults and nagging, which would have stung anyone else to violent action, fell harmlessly upon him, and only made him grin.

"What—the blessed old heavies again?" he would say. "Not if I know it. Here, have some cake and stop gassing."

And having fed his tormentors, he would help himself largely, and change the subject to the excellency of Telson's cakes and doughnuts, till at last Jepson and Ray gave up the attempt in despair, and tried to console themselves with thoughts of the undignified figure Hunt was sure to cut at Aldershot.

II

Neither Jepson nor Ray patronised the gymnasium to any great extent. But one afternoon, having played hockey first hour, it occurred to them to turn into the gallery. As a spectacle it was not very exciting, but there was at least one interesting feature on the floor below. The gym sergeant had an exceptionally fine black eye.

"I say, what a beauty!" said Ray. "I wonder who gave it him. Can the Gorilla have been boxing unknown to us?"

"Not he!" said Jepson. "You can't help getting a black eye now and then, when you're coaching a lot of men. Hullo! what's up? Is there a master down there?"

Till now, most of the gymnasts, who had gone to gym to escape "sweats"—*i.e.*, long, dreary runs—had been ragging happily. But it was clear that something had occurred to put an end to their peaceful enjoyment. With feverish energy they set to work, and began to make clumsy efforts at climbing ropes, circling upon bars, and swinging along ladders. One actually tried a short-arm balance, and was only saved from disaster by the opportune arrival of the sergeant. Even the earnest seekers after knowledge seemed ill at ease, and cast sidelong glances at the hidden space under the gallery.

"Master?" echoed Ray. "Not by a good deal. Bet you sixpence it's Hunt."

For all his achievements, Hunt was probably the most unpopular boy in the school, not that this worried him. He never bullied anyone, he hardly ever exerted his official powers. But he was feared and obeyed, nevertheless, and the mere sight of him was enough to crush any riotous high spirits, even in big boys. He was intensely superior, and had a knack of letting everyone know that he looked down on them. Even young masters had been known to confess in Common Room that Hunt's towering manner overwhelmed them.

"There, I told you so," went on Ray as Hunt appeared, taking as much notice of the boys around him as if they had been a flock of sparrows.

"Good afternoon, sergeant," he said, condescendingly. "I say, your eye looks bad. I'd no idea I gave it such a punch. Would you rather not have a turn to-day?"

"As soon as I'm ready, Mr. Hunt," replied the sergeant, none too cordially. "I shan't be long now. I've had black eyes before."

"I expect you have," said Hunt. "However, I'll take care not to hit it."

"My aunt!" said Jepson above. "Hunt gave him that black eye. He must be able to box, after all."

"A fluke," retorted Ray. "A chap who knows nothing sometimes gets a good biff in without meaning to. Let's stop and see the sergeant give him what for. They always do when anyone learning hits them hard."

Comparatively very few boxing instructors can refrain from this very unsportsmanlike practice, and Hunt's opponent was no exception. He put up his hands with every intention of making Hunt pay, not so much for the black eye as for an undefinable something else which he disliked much more. But the settlement of the account was not made that day. The first few exchanges showed that Hunt was vastly the better fighter of the two. He had less knowledge, but he made up for the lack by a panther-like quickness, and clean, neat hitting. The sergeant could make nothing of him, and, even from the gallery, Jepson and Ray could see that he was angry.

Hunt, however, did not seem to be aware of this, or to look upon the spar as anything but a lesson. He carefully avoided hitting the damaged eye, and every now and then he stopped to have some manœuvre explained to him. At last the lesson ended, and Hunt, undamaged and unwinded, helped the sergeant to get his gloves off.

"Do you think I shall be good enough for Aldershot?" he said, but his tones expressed that he himself had no doubt on the subject.

The sergeant looked at him at last with unwilling admiration.

"Well, Mr. Hunt," he said, "I don't know what they've got at Rugby or Fettes this year, but I'll say this much, the man who licks you'll need to be a champion."

"Oh, never mind other schools," said Hunt. "Is there anyone else here?"

"Not in the heavies, sir. But, as a matter of form, there'll have to be a competition advertised."

"The Gorilla will enter," said Ray, and he meant it.

Hunt looked up and smiled; and but for what he had just seen, Ray would gladly have run amuck on him for that smile, though Ray was not quarrelsome.

"The competition isn't for who is to be fat boy at the fair," he said, indulgently.

"Mr. Johnstone can fight," said the sergeant. "He won at Aldershot in——"

"Yes, yes, I know," said Hunt. "As a feather-weight in the year one, since when he's done nothing but fatten himself up."

"He said he hoped you wouldn't challenge him, because he didn't want to hurt you," said Ray.

"There isn't much fat about the Gorilla," said Ray. "It's all good muscle."

"Beef," said Hunt. "He's more like a prize ox than a man. However, that's his affair. If he likes to challenge me, of course I must take it up."

III

"He'll never do it," said Jepson.

"He'll jolly well have to," replied Ray. "Come on, we'll have it out with him now."

"What about Horace?" said Jepson, who was shaky in the subject. "Don't rot. It's no——"

"It's going to be," interrupted Ray. "Horace be blowed. We must take the swagger out of Hunt, and the Gorilla's the only man who can do it. I shan't do any prep., or let you do any either, till we've settled with him."

With a groan, Jepson laid down his books and the pair left their study and went upstairs to the upper corridor. Both were too great to need to ask permission for such wanderings in the sacred prep. hour. Besides, their intended victim was captain of his corridor, and one does not humble oneself before a victim.

Discipline on the upper corridor was lax. There was a plainly audible hum of voices, broken occasionally by real laughter, and just as the pair reached the corridor they heard a door open and close.

"The slackest captain ever in the house," remarked Ray. "Bet you sixpence he doesn't move, even if we walk up the corridor without saying anything."

Jepson declined the bet, and immediately afterwards wished he had taken it, for they were only half-way up the corridor when a voice, like the bellowing of a peaceful bull, came from a single study behind them.

"I say, you men," said the voice, "take your slippers off next time; then I shan't hear you."

"Slacker!" retorted Ray, turning back. "We just did it to rot you."

They entered the study, which was a small one, and gave the impression of being filled by a huge, massively built boy, lounging back in an easy-chair, eating doughnuts, with his legs on a play-box. He was not beautiful to look at. His head was small, set on a very thick neck, his face flat but there was a look of lazy good-nature in, the latter which explained the happy, if ill-disciplined, atmosphere on his corridor.

"Come right in," he said, grinning cheerfully, and extending a very long arm in greeting. "Have a doughnut?"

"We will," said Ray, firmly. "Every jolly one of them," and he confiscated the bag.

"Bully," said Johnstone. "Beastly bully! Why should I be robbed of my food? My doctor says——"

"Which his name is Harris, front name Ananias," retorted Ray. "You're not going to have any more doughnuts or anything of the sort. You've got to get into training."

"I shall strike," said Johnstone. "It's the fashionable thing to do nowadays, as a protest against stealing my doughnuts."

"That's just what you've got to do," replied Jepson. "Strike. Gorilla, do you love Hunt?"

"Oh, the blessed old heavies again! I might have known it," said the Gorilla. "No good, my sons; besides, I am the school heavyweight. Thirteen ten. There isn't a man within a stone of me."

"I suppose you can't help it," said Ray. "You've got to train and lick Hunt, and represent the school at Aldershot."

"Why so down on his high mightiness?" said Johnstone. "He can't help it any more than I can."

"Well," said Ray, slowly, "when I told him to-day that you'd probably challenge him, he said the competition wasn't for the job of fat boy in a freak show."

"Did he, really?"

"Yes, he said that you were better at fattening yourself than boxing, and that you were more like a prize ox than a man; he said it before a lot of kids."

"Oh!" That was all Johnstone said, but the tone made Ray hopeful.

"Yes, and he said he hoped you wouldn't challenge him," said Ray, drawing on his imagination at last, "because he didn't want to hurt you."

The Gorilla grinned, beginning by showing his teeth at the corners of his mouth before he parted his lips in front, and the world became a good place for Ray. He knew that strange smile well. It meant "clear for action."

"Then you'll go into training?" he said.

"I'm going to smash that funny ass, if that's what you mean," said Johnstone. "But, oh, my canonised aunt! how does one train? Isn't it very beastly?"

"Simply frantic," said Ray. "No doughnuts, no cake." Johnstone groaned. "No Telson's, no spuds, no jam, no apple-tart, and a thundering good sweat with me and Jepson every day. The sergeant will tell you how to fill up your spare time."

"But what's the good for Hunt?" pleaded the Gorilla. "You say he's never boxed till this term."

"And he's better than the sergeant already. I tell you, it'll take you all your time to lick him."

The Gorilla's little eyes twinkled. Here was a possible foe worthy of him. He had not met such a one for many terms, and the prospect gladdened his heart.

"I'm on," he said. "But remember, it's up to you two fellows to train me. I'll never do it on my own."

"Trust us for that," said Ray, grimly. and the Gorilla knew that his words rang true.

At twelve o'clock next day the notice calling for names for school boxing appeared on the notice-board with Hunt's name in the heavy class. That great man himself was in the little crowd round the board, when the Gorilla strode up to record his challenge.

"Make way for a little one, you cripples," he said as he pushed his way in. His voice boomed like a bittern's in the stone cloisters, but two small boys did not seem to hear it, and leant shoulder to shoulder in his path. Johnstone chuckled, and laying a mighty hand on each he lifted them off their feet and put them down well out of his way, at which both set up a loud squeal. Of course, it may have been an accident, but it so happened that he had set one of them down hard on Hunt's toes.

"Hang you!" exclaimed Hunt, his splendid imperturbability deserting him for once. "Why can't you look where you are going?"

He raised his hand to hit the small boy as he tried to squirm away. But the Gorilla shot out his long arm and took the blow.

"Beastly sorry, old son," he boomed. "My fault, not his. I was chucking him out of the road."

"I should have thought you knew better than to play the buffoon before a lot of kids," said Hunt sourly, putting his hands back in his pockets.

"Someone's been too much for you," chuckled Johnstone. "Cheer up, old man, you'll soon be dead. What ho! Are you really going in for the heavies, Hunt?"

"I've reason to believe so."

"Well, Ray said something about it, but I told him that he lied," said Johnstone without a blush. "I didn't know you'd ever sparred in your life. Do you know anything about it?" he added, as he wrote his own name in large letters all across the paper. "And in the heavies, too. What's your weight, old son?"

Hunt was very angry. His trouble was that he really did consider himself a superior person, and here he was being ignominiously cross-examined before a lot of kids, who were not trying to hide their grins.

"About twelve stone," he replied in a sort of impersonal tone, as who should say, "And what business is it of yours?"

But there was no squashing the Gorilla.

"Yes," he said, looking at Hunt critically, "I suppose you are. Let's see your reach."

"Some other time," said Hunt in his best emperor to a black-beetle manner. "Excuse me, Johnstone, but I'm busy."

"Oh, come off the roof," chuckled the Gorilla. "Stretch out your arm. Come on, right out. M'yes, I've a lot the better of you there, and I suppose I shall fight about thirteen seven. But you're a lot quicker on your feet than I am, I expect. It ought to be a jolly good scrap, anyhow. Let's see, when does it come off?"

"Saturday four weeks," replied Hunt. "None too much time, either, for you to train in."

"No, by Jove! you're right," said the Gorilla. "That reminds me, I promised Ray I'd go straight back to house to go for a sweat with him. So-long, Hunt."

As Johnstone staggered, Hunt put in a drive on his chest with all the force he could muster, and the Gorilla went down.

For a week the recollection of Hunt's (reported) insults, and of his pleasant little interview with him, kept the Gorilla's keenness alive. Then the memory of the fleshpots of Egypt became more than he could bear, and he decided that a less vigorous rule was more than good enough for Hunt. About that

time, however, Hunt gave the sergeant another black eye, knocking him down at the same time. The sergeant did not mind that so much, but he strongly resented not being able to knock Hunt down, and much more Hunt's offensively patronising manner. Under the influence of his black eye and resentment, he spoke his mind to the Gorilla.

"The man's a natural born fighter, Mr. Johnstone," he said; there was more before that which must be omitted. "I've never met one like him, not even you, sir. It'll take you all your time to lick him, but I hope and think you'll do it."

Johnstone knew that the sergeant knew his business, and Ray and Jepson had no more trouble with him on the score of slackness. But the time was short for so heavy a man. When the day came at last it was evident that the long course of doughnuts and cake had done their deadly work all too well. The Gorilla was far short of proper condition; indeed, the sergeant said he could have done with another fortnight. However, there was nothing to be done now. If Hunt's triumphant progress was to be stayed, the Gorilla was the only man who could even make an attempt at checking his career, and Ray and Jepson duly convoyed him to the gym on the fateful night. Of the three, the mighty gladiator alone was cheerful. Ray and Jepson were barely civil to anyone, and openly insulting to their champion. But the Gorilla merely grinned.

IV

"TIME: seconds out of the ring."

Hunt was already in the middle of the ring, while the Gorilla was still heaving his huge frame out of his chair, and he stood, tapping his thigh with a slightly bored look on his face, as if he looked upon the whole affair as an unnecessary trouble. The Gorilla approached Hunt with his "clear for action" grin, and held out his hand.

"What ho, old son!" he said. "Feeling fit? More than I am. Don't hurt me."

Hunt laughed in his superior way, and began by making a bad mistake. The Gorilla, though a mass of muscle, looked too heavy to be a quick beginner, and Hunt dashed in without any preliminary sparring, trusting to his own panther-like quickness. But Johnstone's slowness of movement was no more real than that of a bear, which also seems a slow sluggish fighter. He had a way of getting to work without any preliminaries, and while Hunt had been developing his attack, quick though he was, the Gorilla had made his good, and Hunt staggered. It was a flush hit on the cheek, and Hunt got every ounce of it. For a moment he was laid open, and before he knew what was happening, Johnstone was inside his guard, dealing terrific half-arm jabs, with a happy grin on his homely face.

But, as the sergeant had said, Hunt was a natural born fighter, and proof against demoralisation. He managed at last to get in a heavy counter, his first punch to get home, and then broke clear, just before he was forced on to the ropes. As Johnstone followed him, he ducked and put in a heavy one on the jaw which made the Gorilla shake his head.

"My aunt!" he said to himself. "The guy's better'n I thought. I must go slow."

He went slow, and Hunt, having had a full taste of his quality, went slow too. He was beginning to wish he had not said quite so much about prize oxen and fat boys, and was making the discovery, which better men than he have made to their cost, that a big ponderous man is not necessarily a duffer because of his size and weight. The rest of the round was tame, but very scientific. There was plenty of clean but not very hard hitting, and brisk exchanges, and lots of good footwork on Hunt's part. The Gorilla, remembering his lack of condition, did not move much, but let Hunt come to him. Neither cared to take risks till the round was nearly over, when Hunt thought he saw a chance of a knock-out, and went down full length for his pains. Good though he was, he had a lot to learn in ringcraft still. He was just getting up when the gong sounded, which was lucky for him, for the Gorilla's terrific punch had shaken him badly.

"How do you feel?" said Ray to his man.

"Top-ping!" grunted the Gorilla between gasps. "I say, he's jolly good. This is——"

"Shut up!" said Ray. "You're blowing like a grampus. Save your breath for Hunt."

Johnstone took the hint, and let himself rest, which he understood doing better than Hunt. When time was called he had got his wind back and was prepared to enjoy himself thoroughly. For nearly a minute they played cautiously as before, Johnstone still keeping his ground. Then, suddenly, as Hunt drew back after a rally the big chap moved after him, and, without troubling about defence, made a terrific onslaught, in a style like that of old-time prize-fighters.

Hunt was altogether taken by surprise. He understood leads with the left, flush hits, counters, half-arm jabs, hooks, and the rest,

but this hurricane of blows was outside his brief experience. He gave way because there was nothing else to do—Johnstone was not called the Gorilla for sarcastic reasons—and before he knew what was happening, he was up against the ropes. He got a few returns, but for all the effect they had, he might have been punching a ball. Johnstone was not nearly so soft as he had supposed. In fact he was not soft at all. Things were getting desperate. Something had to be done, and Hunt's something consisted in a very undignified duck and scramble, which, however, got him clear. But Johnstone was up with him at once, and, merely grinning at a heavy right and left on the jaw which he did not try to guard, he forced him on to the ropes again. Again Hunt scrambled clear, and as he did so he heard his second hiss at him. "Go for his body, you fool!"

Like most beginners, Hunt had devoted nearly all his attention to Johnstone's head and face, which had been so designed by Nature that it was practically impossible to hurt him there. Hunt was dazed, he had only one serviceable eye left, and he hardly knew what he was doing, but when Johnstone closed with him again he hunched up his shoulders and jabbed viciously at the Gorilla's lower ribs. The result was like magic. The rain of blows slackened at once, Johnstone grunted, and came on the defensive again, which encouraged Hunt. In his turn he began to attack, and, making the best use of his cat-like swiftness, he got in several good body blows which made the Gorilla grunt still more, and put an end to his grins. Hunt followed up his advantage and found his adversary visibly slackening off. At last he thought he saw his way to a knock-out, and put in a good swing, before which anyone but Johnstone would have gone down. But the Gorilla merely shook his head and countered heavily on Hunt's nose, checking his ardour thoroughly, and the round ended very tamely. The Gorilla was too badly winded to do much, and Hunt had had all he wanted for the moment.

Johnstone said nothing during his rest, Hunt's body blows had found out his weak point, the doughnut point, and when time was called, he had not got his wind and was still gasping painfully. Hunt met him before he was fairly on his feet, and for the first time got him to the ropes. Ray and Jepson, and practically the whole audience, groaned. No one wanted Hunt to win, and here he had Johnstone apparently at his mercy. The big fellow seemed able to do no more than guard his ribs, and that none too successfully; and Hunt did what he liked with him. But at last Hunt let his over-confidence give him away. He laid himself open to a swing, and got it well under the ear. Before he could recover, Johnstone had got clear and was in the middle of the ring.

Once there he stopped there, holding Hunt off with his long arms. But it was clear to all that this state of affairs could not last. His breath was coming in gasps, his broad chest was heaving painfully, and his punches lacked power. But Hunt took no chances, and played carefully, waiting for an opening which came before long. After an exchange, Johnstone's long arms went wide, and, in a flash Hunt had closed. Right and left he put in two terrific half-arm jabs under the other's jaw, and as Johnstone staggered, Hunt put in a drive on his chest with every ounce in him behind it. Johnstone staggered a moment, and then went down.

But still he was not knocked out. Just as the referee was about to count him out, he rose, and then Hunt made his final and fatal error. He rushed in to finish him off before he could shape again, throwing all caution to the winds. He had yet to learn the possibilities of nine and a half seconds' rest in the middle of a round, and his enlightenment was complete. He hit out, and remembered seeing Johnstone duck. The next thing he knew was that he was lying on a gym mattress, looking up out of one eye at the far-off roof. Then the sergeant's face came between his one eye and the ceiling.

"What's the matter, sergeant?" he said. "Did I beat him?"

"Beat him?" said the sergeant. "Not you, sir. He knocked you out—the neatest job I ever saw."

"Say," said a voice like the bellow of a bull. "Shake old man. That was a topping scrap. But you had me beat, really. It was just luck that knocked you out. You'd better go to Aldershot. I shan't be fit."

"I don't think I will, thank you," said Hunt, rising slowly. His eye troubled him, but he felt nothing of the knock-out blow, and still did not know exactly how it had come. "You've another week to train in, and I could no more beat you than I could fly, if you were fit. I was an ass to think I could. Now I think I'll get off to my study. You might come as well, I've enough for two."

THE END

How to Sail a Model Yacht

By E. D. RODWAY

By following the advice given in this article, which has been specially written for "The Captain," you will be able to take part in a fascinating pastime.

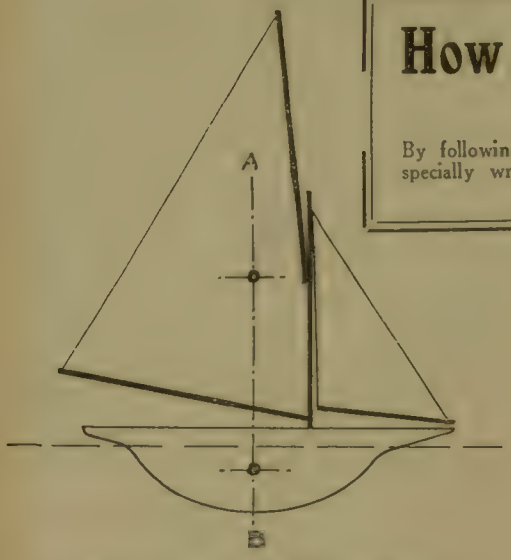


Fig. 1.—Plan of a simple sailing yacht.

NO doubt many of my readers possess some sort of sailing boat, and probably also many of them take an interest in constructing their own models. I know I was fond of making boats when I was a boy; but, having no guidance and little knowledge of the subject, I am afraid I did not produce anything of a very high order. Moreover, as I did not understand the principles of sailing, I am also afraid that I missed a good deal of the pleasure there is to be found in the *intelligent* sailing of model yachts.

I say *intelligent*, because merely to put a boat on a pond and let the wind blow it where it will is a poor sort of game; but to make your boat sail a predetermined course requires not only judgment and practice, but knowledge of the principle of the subject; more especially so in racing, where it is not only necessary to make your boat sail to a given spot, but to do it in the shortest time. It then becomes a pastime of keen enjoyment; as all games of skill should be to a healthy boy, whether young or old.

It is, therefore, in the hope of encouraging a love for this sport that these notes are written; and I think that, as the reader follows them, he will begin to see more in it than he imagined there to be.

There are three principal directions of sailing with respect to the direction of the wind, viz., beating, or tacking, to windward; reaching, or moving at right angles to the wind's course; scudding, or running before the wind. We will deal with each in turn; but let us first consider a simple sail plan and the effect of wind upon it.

Fig. 1 shows such a plan which, although simple, is very effective, and cannot be beaten for ease of handling.

Now suppose we cut a piece of card to the shape of the outline of the sail plan, and find upon it a point from which to suspend it by a thread, this point being in such a position that the card will hang quite horizontal. On first trial it will probably be found that the card hangs slantingly, but there is a certain point of suspension on the card's surface from which it will hang balanced. (Fig. 2.)

This point is called the centre of effort, and is of importance in considering the effect of wind pressure on the sail area. Having found this point let us rule a vertical line through it as at A B Fig. 1. Suppose, now, we could mount this card on a point like a weathercock, and place our pivot on this centre line we have just drawn, then it will be evident that the wind pressure forward of the line will tend to turn our weathercock round one way, and the pressure aft of the line will tend to turn it the other way.

Since, however, the area exposed to the wind on one side of the line is equal to that on the other it would make a very poor weathercock, as it would rest at right angles to the wind. You, of course, know that a weathercock is made *unequal* so that the larger end is blown away from, and the smaller end points into the wind.

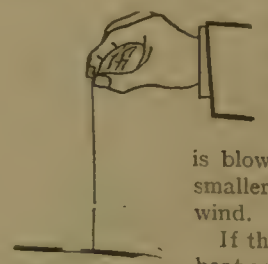


Fig. 2.—Finding the centre of effort.

If the fore and aft sails of a boat were pulled in tight, and the boat placed on the water at right angles to the wind's direction, the only effect, theoretically at any rate, would be that the boat would be blown sideways without any movement forward or backward across the wind. (Fig. 3.)

Now, if we place the foresail of our weather-

cock at an angle, the wind will have less power on the fore part of the sail area, and consequently the after part will move away from and the fore part move into the wind, and our weathercock ship will be sailing more or less to *windward* according to the angle made by the foresail. The weathercock has, of course, turned until it has reached a position where the wind pressures are again balanced. (Fig. 4.)

It will be seen from this that to sail to windward it is necessary to have the aft sails pulled in and the fore sails eased out, and I hope that the weathercock illustration will make clear why it is so.

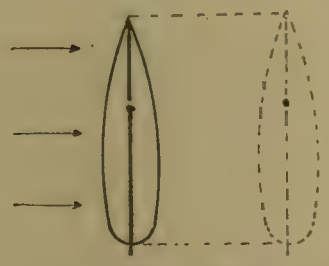


FIG. 3.—If the fore and aft sails are tight and at right angles to the direction of the wind, the boat simply moves sideways.

The exact angle of the sails to the centre-line of the boat and to one another will determine the course, and the closer the aft, or main, sail is pulled in, the "nearer to the wind" the boat will sail. Hence the familiar phrase "close hauled to windward," or "close hauled on the starboard (or port) tack."

I think it will be easily understood that the "nearer" the wind a boat is sailed the slower and the full line being the faster course but advancing less rapidly for each tack.

With models we cannot, of course, change the sails or rudder when in "mid-ocean," and therefore when speaking of tacking, it will be understood that we are sailing from side to side of a pond or river, turning the boat's nose round into the wind each time she comes inshore. The full line course will usually be found the best, and it is certainly easier to sail it as, unless our model is a good one, we shall find difficulty in keeping her on one tack near the wind—the tendency is for the boat to "come about" with every strong puff, *i.e.*, to change from one tack to the other, with the result that she loses "way" and makes but little progress.

There is another factor of great importance to which we must give our consideration. I mentioned just now the case of a boat being blown sideways. Now if the portion of the boat's hull *below* the water is of large area it will naturally offer more resistance to "broadside" or lateral movement than if this submerged area is small. To use the proper technical term, the *area of lateral resistance* is greater. This lateral resistance enables us to sail in other directions than down the wind; and, to illustrate this point, let us consider the case of sailing on a "reach," *i.e.*, at right angles to the wind. From what we have already said, it will be understood that if we want to keep our boat at right angles to the wind the wind pressure must be equal fore and aft of our centre line on the sail area,

FIG. 4.—If the foresail is placed at an angle towards the wind the ship will move to windward.

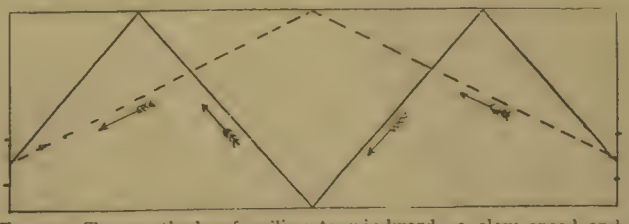


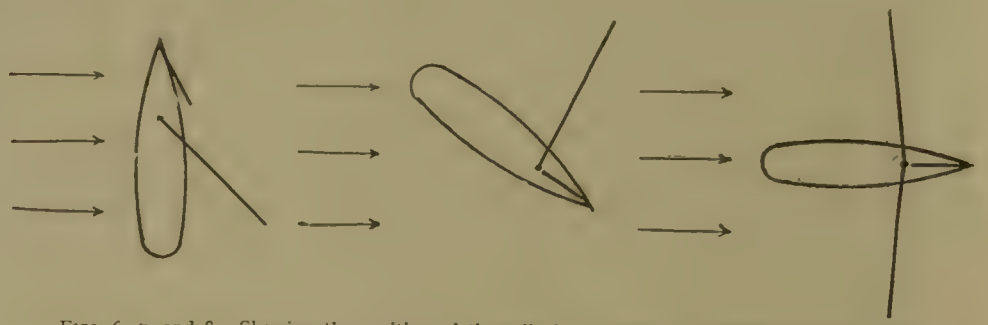
FIG. 5.—Two methods of sailing to windward—a slow speed and few tacks, and faster speed with more tacks.

will be its speed, and when racing, when the course is a windward one, it is a matter for the model yachtsman to determine how close to the wind to sail. Some boats will sail much closer than others, and it is only by experience that one can decide whether a certain boat is likely to do best near the wind at a comparatively slow speed and making few tacks, or at a faster speed at a greater angle to the wind and many tacks, therefore covering more "ground." In Fig. 5 the two tracks are shown; the dotted line being the slower but more direct,

as, for instance, when fore and main sails are both pulled in tight. But it is also evident that with the sails so set there would be no movement except a sluggish broadside one (see Fig. 3), so that we let out the mainsail to, say, half a right angle—45degs.—and as the foresail is smaller in area, and therefore less powerful, we let this out rather less, say 20degs. to 30degs., from the centre line of the boat. (See Fig. 6.) Now both sails lie at an angle to the wind, and, as the hull below water offers resistance to lateral or broadside movement, the effect of

a movement forward across the wind or, in sailing language, "reaching."

There must, however, be *some* lateral movement, especially if the wind is strong, and this leeway, as it is called, will naturally be greater with a shallow boat than with one of good draught.



Figs. 6, 7, and 8.—Showing the position of the sails for reaching, for sailing down the wind, and when using the spinnaker.

A well-built model should make very little leeway when reaching unless the wind is particularly powerful. You can easily understand from this why sailors dread a "lee shore" during a gale. A point might be mentioned here which, although primarily of importance to the designer and builder of a boat, is one which the boat's skipper will do well to understand. I have explained the centre of effort of the sail area, and just as there is a point of balance, as it were, there, so there is also a similar point of balance on the submerged portion of the hull. This is therefore called the centre of lateral resistance, and if a cord were fastened to the hull at this point and used to tow it through the water broadside on, the hull would maintain its broadside position at right angles to the cord, and not try to skew round.

Fig. 9.—The full cutter is especially good at beating to windward.

It is of great importance in rigging a boat that the centre of effort be placed directly over the centre of lateral resistance, as, unless this is done, the boat will always be more or less cranky in sailing and quickly get off her course. If the reader will turn back to Fig. 1 he will see the two points marked on the vertical line, A B. Now a simple sail plan as shown in this figure with only main and fore sail will not suffice to sail a boat directly down the wind. The best we can do is to let the mainsail right out and pull the foresail close in, and the boat will take a course somewhat as indicated in Fig. 7. The reason for this position is, of course, that the large sail, if on the port side as shown, forces the bows round to starboard till a balance is obtained between main and fore sails, and it will be evident from this diagram that it is important to have the foresail pulled in as close as possible to give it power to keep the boat's head down the wind.

For sailing a course absolutely with the wind with a boat rigged in this manner a special sail is necessary. This is called a spinnaker, and is usually a triangular sail which should be of the same area as the mainsail.

The spinnaker is set with its boom on one side, and the mainsail boom on the other side of the boat, while the foresail, which now does little or no work, is pulled in close. In this way

your boat will sail down the wind at a fine rate. (Fig. 8.)

Now having dealt with the three chief courses of sailing, you will be able to work out the intermediate courses for yourself. Let us look at a few types of rig that are commonly met with in models. The full cutter (Fig. 9) is a great favourite, and justly so, as it will sail well any way, and is especially good in beating to windward, when the jib foresail should be taken down unless the wind be very light. A cutter coming inshore on a short tack with bellying sails is a beautiful sight.

FIG. 10.—The schooner.

The schooner (Fig. 10) and lugger (Fig. 11) are also good types frequently met with; these are excellent for reaching, and travel at good speed. In running down the wind, no spinnaker is needed, as the booms of the two large sails are let out one on each side. (Fig. 12.)

Square-rigged models are sometimes used, such as the brig and square topsail schooner; but, although very pretty to look at they are not particularly fast except down the wind, and are very troublesome to handle, as there are so many adjustments to make for every change of course.

As you will easily appreciate, different types require different handling, and it is not only good fun but very instructive to sail, say, a

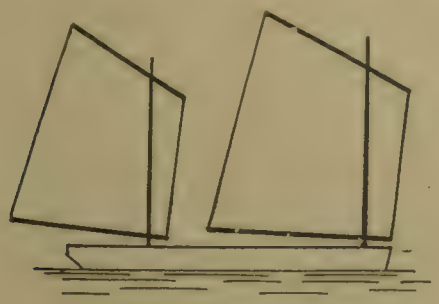


FIG. 11.—The lugger.

lugger and a cutter together and make them keep as near as possible to the same course.

The golden rule to follow may be briefly put as follows: Against the wind, slack foresails, tight mainsails. With the wind, tight foresails, slack mainsails; and, of course intermediate gradations for intermediate courses.

For the sake of avoiding complication I have omitted any reference to the question of steering by rudder. If the wind only blew steadily there would be little need of steering-gear on models—the set of the sails would suffice; but, as it is generally more or less in puffs and gusts, some means of compensating for the corresponding effects is essential.

To take a simple case for the purpose of illustration, suppose our sails are correctly set for a reaching course with a given *constant* wind pressure. Then should a heavy gust strike our craft, she will heel over and tend to "screw into the wind," and may even come round to such an extent the sails will fill on the other side, and cause her to come about on the opposite tack, in which case she would return more or less towards her starting-point.

Now, as we cannot be on board and adjust our rudder to suit the varying power of the wind, and check the tendency of the boat to screw into it, we want some automatic means of doing it. One method of accomplishing this, which is effective within limits but requires careful setting, is to run the mainsheet through screw eyes and secure the other end to the foresail, Fig. 13. "Sheets," by the way, are not sails, but the cords used to set the sails' angle, and the "mainsheet" is the cord used for the mainsail, and so on.

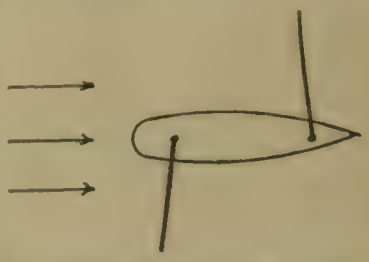


FIG. 12.—Sailing down the wind with a schooner or lugger, the booms being let out on each side.

The effect of this device, as you will see by the figure, is that a heavy puff of wind will cause the mainsail to pull the foresail in tighter, and therefore give the wind more power on this, the fore, side of the sail area; consequently preventing the tendency to nose round to windward. This is shown in the diagram with the wind on the port side, and it is, of course, necessary to thread the sheet through

other screw eyes on the opposite side when reaching with the wind to starboard.

Another, and to my mind more satisfactory, method of compensating for varying wind is to have a self-acting rudder, which will of itself give a degree of "helm" depending on the power of the wind.

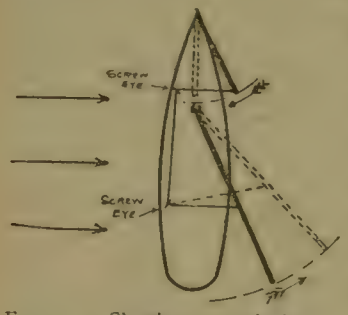


FIG. 13.—Showing a method of adapting the sails to accommodate themselves to the varying power of the wind.

There are many ways of doing this, but the simplest is to have a weighted rudder hung on the slant as shown in Fig. 14. This rudder has no tiller, but is free to swing when the boat heels over under a strong breeze, and therefore as it leans *away* from the wind it gives the boat helm on the side necessary to keep the bows away from it. The more the boat heels over the more powerfully the rudder will act, and we therefore have here a simple device which acts as well as we could ourselves if we were on board and had the tiller in our hands—or perhaps even better, as it makes no mistakes!

We require several sizes of rudder, for it is obvious that only a slight helm check will be required with a moderate wind, and a powerful helm in rough, squally weather. Also the same rudder would not serve for all directions of sailing. Three or four sizes should be used, the largest being about four to six times the size of the smallest. My own plan is to cast them in lead, and fit screw eyes to hang on to hooks in the stern-post. The size of these rudders depends upon the size of the model; but, as a rough guide, I may say that for the largest size I use a lead rudder weighing about a pound and having an area of about eight square inches for a three-foot boat.

If your boat is fitted with the ordinary rudder with tiller to fix in definite position, and you are at all handy with tools, I advise you to remove it, and to try the weighted rudders. Bear in mind that the smallest will generally be all that is necessary for windward sailing, or even none at all if the wind is light, and that the size should be increased as the course desired changes round to the other extreme—running before the wind, when the heaviest and largest will be required. There is a double advantage in this latter, as when on this course there is a tendency for the wind to push the bows under water, and by hanging a heavy rudder at the stern the bows are raised up higher than their normal position, enabling the boat to ride better and not smother herself with water or check her speed.

Start your boat on a reach, first making sure that your rudder, medium size, can swing

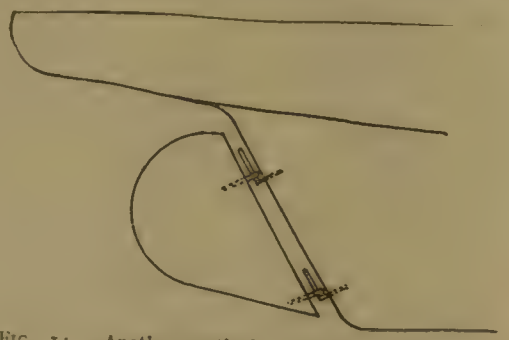


FIG. 14.—Another method of counteracting varying wind pressure by means of a weighted rudder.

freely, and if during a gust she screws toward the wind your rudder should be heavier, as a more powerful helm is wanted; if, on the other hand, she falls away from the wind, your rudder is too powerful, and should be changed for a lighter one.

If, as I hope, I have made myself clear on all these various points, you will now want to take your boat out, and try the effect of carrying out these instructions.

Watch carefully every movement of your boat; and, in the light of what I have tried to tell you, try to connect cause and effect to each. In this way you will soon learn to work your craft with a fair degree of certainty, and you will be able to challenge your chums to a race with their boats, with some confidence of success.

THE END

BLACK PANTHER

A Thrilling Story of Jungle Peril

By THOMPSON CROSS Illustrated by L. R. Brightwell

CHAPTER I

THE potail pursed up his lips and wagged his forefinger.

"Careful, my lord!" he said, his eyes uneasy. "Careful! For the elephant thief has eyes and ears like Hathi himself, and if his gun speaks from the jungle there it will be to the unworthy servant of my lord, myself, who hath betrayed him. So, with your honour's permission, I will sit down in the bottom of the boat, so that I may be invisible to him."

Dick Lothian, lounging in the stern of the little canoe with his sun-helmet tilted on the back of his fair head, grinned slightly as the grey-bearded head-man of the little jungle village squatted down in the well of the rough-built little craft that swept gently through the green, colour-splotched twilight of the overhanging forest, along the current of the Brahmaputra River.

He straightened himself, with his pulse beating a little harder than usual, and stared with keen eyes at the tangled undergrowth that slid slowly past. A parakeet screeched as it flashed overhead like a gleam of coloured fire; and, in the depths of the jungle, faint and far away, a noise that was like the bray of a cracked trumpet pricked the hot silence. It was the sound of an elephant at one of the forest water-holes. But in the long intervals of quiet that closed down upon every faint noise the jungle was like a giant thing holding its breath.

"He lurks, then, by the edge of the river, this elephant thief?" Dick Lothian asked.

The potail's white eyebrows went among the wrinkles of his forehead.

"Who can say where Jennison Sahib and the black thieves who are his followers may be, your honour?" He shrugged his shoulders, where he crouched in the bottom of the boat. "He is a piece of quicksilver, quicker than the hand of a juggler at the fair, more mysterious and more elusive than Black Panther, the rogue-elephant who kills a man one day in the maize fields of Gureepoore and the next tramples down the *machans* in the Doon, a hundred miles away. But it is hereabouts where last his camp was. There are many elephants in the forest; so it is here that Jennison Sahib, elephant thief, will linger. Will your lordship go ashore now?"

Dick Lothian, assistant conservator of forests, stared absently at the shore without answering. He was not quite sure how he would deal with the man whom half the forest officers in the Doon Province were seeking—the big parchment-faced American who was thieving like any village poacher among the elephants of that vast, trackless jungle land for the sake of their ivory. He had dreamed of the mysterious Jennison so often that, even as he drifted through the heavy silences of the jungle, he was not sure that he was awake. It seemed absurd that he, the youngest and most junior forest officer in all the Sewalik Hills, should be within hand-grasp of the will-o'-the wisp elephant poacher at last. He had heard that Jennison was an educated man, unscrupulous and unprincipled forest outlaw as he was; a man who knew as much about elephants as any old hunter in the north of India, who feared nothing that lived. Even then the Government was fitting out an expedition at Cawnpore to hunt him down. Yet Dick Lothian, junior forest officer, in the course of his visits to the remote jungle villages, having by chance saved the little bullet-headed son of the potail, or head-man, of one of the villages by shooting the big grey wolf that was carrying him off in the dusk of the previous evening, was, by virtue of the potail's gratitude, within a mile

or less of the elephant poacher's camp. If he alone could capture Jennison!

Dick Lothian's face flushed and his fingers went involuntarily to his revolver belt as he spoke softly.

"Turn her inshore," he said.

It was just in the minute that he spoke, as the potail's paddle touched the water and the canoe swerved slowly on the shadowy surface of the river, that something happened.

Where the trees of the jungle dipped and trailed in the water and the swamp flowers shone like unhealthy fever spots, a great crackling noise sounded abruptly. At the water's edge a swaying, flesh-coloured trunk and a great, massive head, set with two red eyes, appeared, and paused for a moment, swinging to and fro as the smouldering eyes watched the canoe and its occupants.

"An elephant, by Jove!" Dick Lothian said, staring. "Not a wild one, I'll be bound."

The potail made a choking noise in his throat, and stabbed the water with his paddle so swiftly that as it swung out into the river again Dick Lothian almost toppled overboard.

"It is the Black Panther!" he said, with a swift hiss of his breath. "The mad elephant with the jagged ears! Sit down, sahib, lest thou fall overboard and he gets thee!"

Dick Lothian sat down slowly, his eyes on the giant beast which had shouldered aside the underbrush and now stood on the narrow fringe of green swamp that edged the river. Dick Lothian was not one to underrate the danger of a rogue elephant. He had seen too many trampled *machans* and too many ugly pictures of death in the trail of a "rogue" to do that. He knew well enough that an old elephant, deposed from the leadership of his herd, and flung out to lead an outcast life in the solitude of the jungle, becomes a dangerous man-slayer, with the cunning of a fox and the cruelty of a tiger.

The beast that stood on the fringe of the river, watching them, was a giant. It was by far the largest elephant Lothian had ever seen, standing like an edifice, motionless, save for the slight swing of the huge head and the quivering of the soft pink nostrils at the end of the long trunk. Its big flap ears, he noticed, were all jagged and torn, and looked to Lothian like great leaves half eaten by caterpillars.

"Good job we didn't land," Lothian said, with a short laugh. "Stop paddling. We're safe enough in mid-stream here. My aunt! What a prize elephant!"

The potail spoke unsteadily. He had never taken his eyes from the beast.

"He carried a maharajah's howdah many years ago, sahib," he said. "He has learnt the cunning of man and the cunning of the jungle which he returned to; and because of that he has a devil in him. He can swim—— Ah, he comes, as I thought he would!"

The potail's voice broke off in a panic-stricken stutter. The rogue elephant, with a sudden shrill trumpet, had stepped into the water, stirring up the mud in turgid clouds, and rippling the smooth water into great wrinkles. For a moment he stood there shoulder-deep, with the mud and water heaving round him. Then, with another loud squeal and his trunk upraised, he began to paddle swiftly out towards the frail canoe.

Lothian took out his revolver swiftly. His hand was steady as he took aim for one of the evil red eyes; but the boat lurched as he fired, and the bullet only ploughed a grey scar on the broad forehead.

"Save yourself, sahib!" the potail cried. "Swim! He will overturn the boat in a moment!"

The big, snake-like trunk writhed out to the low thwarts of the canoe even as Dick Lothian tried to take aim again, and the potail leapt into the water. It was the most deliberate action Lothian had ever seen in his life. As the boat dipped slowly and Lothian clung instinctively to the opposite thwarts, the beast gurgled and squeaked in cynical mischief. Dick Lothian, with a white face, levelled his revolver once more at the little pig's eye that was but a yard from him; but the muddy water poured over the low thwarts of his little craft like a cataract, and he had to clutch with both his hands to save him from sprawling headlong, so that the cocked weapon, exploding, blew a hole in the bottom of the canoe. He had a flash-light glimpse of the potail swimming for his life towards one of the swampy islands in mid-river. Then, with a long breath, he leaped himself and struck out strongly for the shore.

Black Panther trumpeted deafeningly, and lashed the water white as he turned. Lothian, flinging a quick glance over his shoulder as he turned from side to trudgeon stroke, saw with a thrill that the wrinkled grey trunk of the beast, reaching out to him, was but a yard or two behind. He took a great gulp of air and dived into the brown water, swinging to right angles, calling out all the strength of his athletic, well-conditioned body as he forged through the muddy opaqueness. . . .

He rose to the surface again with bursting lungs. He was within five yards of the shore

and the elephant was paddling in the water behind, swaying his giant head to and fro in a puzzled manner which might have been amusing under more favourable circumstances. He caught sight of Lothian as the Britisher reached up to a trailing branch of juniper, and swept forward through the water with a high squeal.

Lothian swung himself to the dry land as the long trunk came curling out towards him. For a second he stood with a feeling of something like despair, whilst the insane animal behind him struggled like a cataclysm to climb ashore, sweeping the fringing water-lilies with wet waves of muddiness. The jungle forest stretched on every side, dark and impenetrable. His revolver, almost useless in the best circumstances against such an enemy, lay at the bottom of the river. His clinging clothes made any idea of a race through the jungle not to be thought of. If he could shin up one of the trees!

He leapt for a big teak tree and caught the smooth trunk with his arms and knees. The hopelessness of the thing fell upon him as he did so. The lowest branch was a dozen feet above him. From the river the rogue-elephant clambered to the shore, as a giant sloth might have risen a hundred thousand years ago, dripping and muddy. Dick Lothian, clinging with hands and knees to the teak tree, closed his eyes with a queer feeling of bitterness at the thought that he should die such a poor death, plucked from a tree-trunk, like a sugared moth, by an insane elephant.

Black Panther reached up his trunk, curled it round his waist and drew him with scarred clutching hands from the tree-trunk. Some flicker of cool reason in Dick Lothian's brain made him think of Black Panther's obedience to man years before.

"Down, Hathi!" he said. "Down!"

He laughed at the hoarse croak which his voice had become. The elephant held him poised high in the air, gurgling and bubbling evilly, Those few moments provided Dick Lothian with all the nightmares that ever attacked him in the years that followed.

The trunk that held him began to sway, swinging him towards the trunk of the tree to which he had clung. He realised, quite coolly, that the beast meant to dash him against the teak tree and break him like an eggshell. . . .

"*Bang-bang!*"

The two deafening explosions followed each other almost simultaneously. A great convulsion passed through Black Panther, the rogue elephant. The acrid smell of gunpowder reached Dick Lothian's nostrils as the trunk that held him grew limp and flabby. He dropped heavily to the ground. In the same moment the big elephant swayed like a drunken man, toppled over, scrambled to his feet again, and ran trumpeting wildly into the dim depths of the jungle.

Dick Lothian saw none of this. His head had struck against a bole of the teak tree as he dropped from the elephant's trunk, and he lay in the thick grass, unconscious, whilst the man with the smoking elephant-gun beneath his arm, who came forward from the jungle twilight, laughed softly as he bent over him.

CHAPTER II

DARKNESS had fallen when Dick Lothian recovered consciousness with a throbbing pain in his head and the sting of spirit on his lips. He seemed to be lying on the cold floor of some chamber that was one half black shadow and the other half shining moonlight. There was a smell of decay over everything. A crumbled wall ran high up to the dimness of an unseen ceiling. Through a big window where the moonlight streamed across the dancing dust-motes he had a glimpse of a half-ruined archway, and the mouldering dome and half-shattered water-tank of a forest temple.

A man stood in the flood of moonlight, watching him with a faint smile twitching the corners of his thin lips as he lounged back against the wall, loose-limbed and big, with his hands in his pockets.

"Hullo, Mr. Forest Officer," he said, drawlingly. "Feeling better?"

The mist melted from Dick Lothian's brain. He rose slowly to his feet with nothing more than a faint sense of sickness and a thin thread of noise singing in his head.

"Thanks," he said. "May I ask to whom I am indebted?"

The man broke into a dry cackle of laughter, and turned his face to the moon.

"Sure!" he said. "My name's Jennison. Guess it's not strange to you."

"Jennison?" Lothian said, slowly. "The elephant poacher! I came to arrest you. I'm sorry."

Jennison cackled again. He was watching Lothian keenly. His eyes were only narrow points of light that shone like a cat's in the moonlight.

"Don't mention it, my boy," he said. "And is that the label they give me? The elephant poacher! Well, well. And the poacher saved

the gamekeeper's life but an hour or so ago. The Black Panther nearly smashed you up then, my young velveteens. I reckon my Springfield barked just in time. Thought it had made the old fellow pass in his checks for good; but he's tough as a battleship. He's dying. There's no doubt about that, because he got both barrels full at the heart. Guess he's made tracks for the nearest graveyard."

Lothian wet his dry lips.

"Yes," he said, "you saved my life. I shall never forget that. But I must not forget my duty. I shall have to arrest you."

He made a step forward. As he did so the gentle banter in Jennison's voice changed to iron, and the humour died out of his wrinkled, dry face.

"You young fool!" he cried, harshly. "Keep still!"

His right hand had shifted a bare fraction in his trousers pocket, and Dick Lothian saw plainly the bulging outline of a revolver there, with the barrel pointing very accurately at his own heart.

"Arrest me!" Jennison said, ironically. "I *should* laugh!"

He stamped his foot twice, and at each entrance of the dim chamber where they stood two wiry little Goorkas seemed to spring from invisibility and salaamed low to Jennison.

Jennison bit the end from a cheroot and spat it out.

"I have a dozen of those little fellows within a hundred yards. You're a plucky young gamekeeper, but you couldn't slip through them, however hard you tried. So I guess I'll have to ask you to be my guest here for the next day or two. Sorry I can't stay to play the guitar and tell you love stories, but I'm busy."

It was the sneer in Jennison's face and in his voice that moved Dick Lothian to leap at him. The impulse was primitive, quite reckless, and probably foolish under the circumstances. But the desire to plant his fist between the man's dry cynical eyes was very vehement. He sprang like a flash, forgetting his head that still swam slightly and the revolver in the American's pocket which still pointed at him. His right fist dropped hard just above Jennison's thin-nostrilled nose, and the satisfying tingle in his fist passed like a glow of warmth to his heart.

"You sneering scug!" he said, fiercely.

He heard Jennison's breath wheeze swiftly. Then, before he realised it, a thunderbolt seemed to strike his chin, shaking every tooth in his head—and he staggered backwards with fantastic lights dancing before his eyes. Even as he fell, half dazed, he realised with a pang of humiliation that it was Jennison's fist which had struck him like the kick of a horse.

He tried to scramble to his feet. One of the Goorkas flung himself upon him and held him down.

Jennison bent over him with blazing eyes. His brown, skinny throat was working with rage as he spoke quickly and chokingly.

"You crack-brained young bantam!" Jennison said, tensely. "You fool servant of a Government of fools! D'ye think I'll have my hunting disturbed by a little golden-haired baby boy hardly out o' long clothes who comes and says I mustn't shoot the pet elephants which the British Government keep in this ten-thousand-mile zoo? I've killed hundreds of 'em, sonny, and sent their ivory two thousand mile down river without the British Government so much as smellin' it. But I'm on a better cinch than that now, my young gamekeeper. I'm on the track of a fairy tale that's coming true. I'm on the trail of the graveyard where all the elephants in the Sewalik Hills go to when they feel themselves dying. Heard o' the place, I reckon, but never knew the cutest old hunter in all the Doon who had ever seen it, or known anyone who had set eyes on it? Yet I'm going to reach it to-morrow. It's no fairy tale this time. That old rogue who all but smashed you up will be there. And elephants who died hundreds and hundreds of years ago will be there, too—their bones and their ivory. It's that I'm after—the ivory. It's not as good in the market as African ivory. But there's enough fortunes for a thousand men in that graveyard that most people think a fairy tale, for all that. So the elephant poacher'll poach no more after to-morrow. He'll be busy packing up a fortune every hour for a day or two before he clears this cursed country for ever!"

Lothian thought he saw fever shine in Jennison's eyes for a moment as he turned away. The American's big bony frame was trembling slightly with excitement or fever, or both. Lothian remembered that it was the beginning of April, the first of the malaria months. It would probably be in his own bones before that night had passed. . . .

"You will stay there to-night," Jennison said, looking over his shoulder, with his elephant gun in the crook of his arm. "I'm going to have a last shot down at the water-holes. My men will look after you. I wouldn't try to run away if I were you. Ram Das there has the quickest

knife-fingers in the north of India and an exceedingly hasty temper. Besides that, the jungle isn't exactly a sweet place to wander through at night-time. This old temple will be safer, though there may be a cobra or two about. Ta, ta!"

He had disappeared in the glow of moonlight outside the ruined temple a moment later.

Dick Lothian watched his shadow lengthen and fade away thoughtfully.

"Trapped this time!" he murmured. "Like any prowling jackal!"

The two Goorkas were squat like motionless idols in the flood of moonlight that rained through the doorway of the old Jain temple. Outside the night life of the jungle had awakened. The long howl of a wolf and the far-away "aurgh-h!" of a tiger that had missed its spring, reached his ears faintly. The elephants, too, were trumpeting in the distance. The breeze hissed softly and moaned a little in the half-crumbled walls of the old temple.

"Mad beggar!" Lothian said to himself. "The fever's got him already. He'll be on his back in a day or two."

He believed, almost, that Jennison was already delirious. He could not be sane and speak of having found one of the elephants' graveyards, of which there were hardly more than half a dozen in the whole of India. Not the most cunning of the greybeard elephant hunters in all the Doon had ever seen such a place, nor their grandfathers before them. They spoke with bated breath round the camp fires of such places. Once, Lothian remembered, an old elephant driver had told of one of his charges who, dying of old age, had broken from his picket lines to breathe his last in such a graveyard. All the men who had ever handled an elephant rifle, or driven a herd into the keddah, knew that a badly wounded elephant always disappeared in the jungle, and was never seen again. But that Jennison had found such a cemetery——

Dick Lothian thrilled a little at the thought of the adventure into which he had been flung headlong. The Goorkas, sitting in the moonlight, looked round swiftly as he moved where he sat. The chamber was full of mysterious shadows and dimnesses. Behind him, leaning back drunkenly, he saw for the first time a great, half-broken idol of Buddha. There seemed to be a thin black shadow at its feet, moving queerly. Dick Lothian watched it with half-absent curiosity, thinking with one of the chambers of his brain whether it would be wiser to make a dash into the night jungle, all unarmed as he was, or wait until daylight and use cunning; thinking with one chamber of his brain and watching the thin moving shadow with the other.

He looked up from the swaying head that fascinated him, and saw that the whole moonlit floor of the temple was alive with cobras.

The moving shadow split into two pieces, and reached the moonlight. Dick Lothian's heart leapt.

The shadows were two cobras. He could see

their fleshy hoods quivering, and the damp sheen of their greeny-black skins in the moonlight. It rushed upon Lothian suddenly that every old city and temple in the jungle became, sooner or later, the haunt of cobras. As the thought struck him, the foremost of the reptiles streamed forward and passed within a foot of him. The little noise he made as he involuntarily drew up his foot caused it to pause for a moment with a faint evil hiss, swaying its hood with the moonlight lighting its beadlike eyes to topaz.

From the blackness behind the idol, three more cobras streamed. One of them poured itself over his foot, and he thought he could feel the cold contact of it through the tough leather of his shoe. It paused uneasily within five inches of his foot, lifting its hood and its swaying head from the coil of its body. It was so near Lothian that he could see the lightning flicker of its tongue and the spectacle-mark on the trembling hood. . . . He knew that if it struck at him its fangs would bite through his shoe as a knife bites through butter.

He looked up for a second from the swaying head that fascinated him, and saw that the whole moonlit floor of the temple was alive with cobras, though the silence, save for the distant cries of the night jungle, was as great as ever, and the Goorkas still sat impassively on their haunches at the door of the temple. . . . Cramp was creeping into the foot that was within six inches of the swaying cobra, and an insane impulse to leap to his feet and dash with closed eyes out into the moonlight, assailed Dick Lothian, though he knew the poison fangs would be in his foot in the very flash of time that he made his first movement.

One of the Goorkas looked round in that second, and sprang up with a shrill cry. At the instant he did so, one of the cobras that were nearest to him stiffened into a black rod and launched itself at him like a flying spear. The Goorka leaped high in air, and the reptile passed beneath his bare feet. A moment later neither of the two men was there.

Dick Lothian sat quite still. A little simmering noise filled the temple as the nest of cobras hissed angrily. That and the beat of his own heart was the only noise that reached his ears, though once he thought he heard a sound like the noise of a heavy body crashing through the jungle quite near the temple. All his stiffened muscles ached. His nerves were fibres of agony. He had remained without motion for almost fifteen minutes, and that is torture for a human being. There was a tickling sensation at the back of his throat that was causing him exquisite pain. A drop of perspiration that trickled down his nose burned his skin like acid. He closed his eyes for a moment, but the terror of being struck by one of the reptiles that crept and hissed about him whilst he sat in the darkness of his shut eyes made him open them again.

Outside, at that moment, the heavy, crashing noise he thought he had heard before, sounded so near that it startled him. He turned his head very slowly, and strained his aching eyes to stare through the crumbling window. The big moon had swung through the sky so that the jumble of fallen roofs, cracked domes, and mouldering archways was bathed in broad light, and he could see the topmost branches of the jungle quivering and swaying in the night breeze.

From the tangled shadow of the jungle, as Dick Lothian gazed, the massive shape of an elephant broke and ambled ponderously, with an unsteady, lurching movement, across the space of moonlight to where the half-ruined water-tank stood. There, still swaying and leaning for support against the tank, as though badly hurt, it dipped its trunk into the water, and drank greedily. Then, filling its trunk again like a hose, it squirted a long jet of water on its gigantic left flank, whimpering and gurgling softly as it did so. Lothian saw that the water, as it streamed down its foreleg, was crimson. In the same moment he saw one of the torn and jagged ears of the beast in the light of the moon.

"Black Panther!" he whispered. "By Jove!"

One of the cobras that lay coiled near him raised its head, hissing, and he stiffened again. It was evident that the rogue elephant, though badly wounded by Jennison's shot, had not made for the cemetery as Jennison had supposed, but had lurked in the jungle, bathing his wounds, and drinking at the water-holes and the river.

He stood for several minutes at the tank, squirting water on his wounds, and resting. Then, with that curiosity which is the predominating passion of all elephants at all times, he moved slowly and ponderously across to the temple where Dick Lothian sat with the cobras.

He stood swaying his trunk uneasily, his soft, fleshy nostrils quivering, at the entrance to the temple. Lothian, watching him with a parched throat, saw that he was bleeding fast, and staggered where he stood, like a drunken man.

He moved forward again. The cobras hissed

as the shadow of his giant head darkened the doorway, but either he was dazed with loss of blood or was entirely reckless.

He shuffled with a heavy thud of footsteps into the temple. One of the cobras struck at his forefoot and then leapt away. The rest flashed out of the moonlight into the shadow behind the idol of Buddha. Two of them streamed over Lothian's knees as they did so.

Lothian rose stiffly to his feet, crouching in the shadow near the idol. The elephant was standing in the middle of the moonlit floor, gurgling and squeaking to himself, tossing his trunk about, feeling with his sensitive proboscis at the walls and projections of the old temple.

Lothian, standing breathless in the shadow, crept back a step as the writhing trunk approached him. . . .

He stepped backwards against the idol, holding his breath. The animal, in the bright moonlight, could not see him, standing in black

Dick fought for his breath among the leaves and branches that clutched at him, as the elephant plunged madly into the jungle.

shadow as he was, but his head was swinging suspiciously, and his eyes flickering.

The soft flesh of the trunk touched his hand for a moment, and Black Panther trumpeted with a sound that raised the echoes of the silent temple.

Lothian gave a swift glance upward to the idol behind him. The knees of the sitting god were only a foot higher than his head. Eight feet higher the single outstretched hand which time had not eaten away still remained. It might hold him if he scrambled up to it, or it might not. There might be cobras there, too. But if the trunk of the wounded rogue elephant caught him again——

He swung himself lightly and silently to the dusty knees of the idol, shaking the great wooden thing with his weight as he did so. The curling trunk of Black Panther groped across to the idol, and, Lothian, poising himself for a second, leapt easily up to the outstretched arm above his head.

It snapped like a rotten branch, and he dropped back with a thrill of sickness, staggered for a moment as he tried in vain to regain his balance on the knees of the idol, and toppled backwards on to something indescribably solid yet soft, rough yet warm. He clutched desperately as the thing he had fallen on heaved beneath him.

"Jehosophat!" he said. It was all he could find to say at that startling moment.

He had fallen upon the broad back of Black Panther, the rogue elephant.

For a moment Dick Lothian failed to realise it, because he knew that as he lay sprawling there, like a recruit on his first horse, he must have presented an entertaining picture, and all the night's adventures had been in the realm of tragedy rather than comedy. Then, with a bellow, Black Panther lurched heavily and swiftly through the door of the temple into the moonlight. Involuntarily, Dick Lothian gripped more firmly with his knees as the beast rolled at the speed of a galloping horse out of the temple courtyard towards the fringe of the jungle. He had an impulse to fling himself backwards from the beast, and then an impulse—which he thought insane at the time—to cling with all his strength, even though the beast should run with him through half the jungles of the Doon.

Then, whilst the two impulses fought, Black Panther crashed into the jungle, and Dick Lothian was fighting for his breath among the leaves and branches that lashed and plucked at him.

He settled himself on the broad neck of the elephant, his teeth set grimly. The darkness of the jungle closed overhead like a tent. A wild vine clutched at him and all but dragged him from his hold. Then the long grass caught his ankles as the elephant plunged through it shoulder deep. A startled night bird struck him, squawking, in the face. Once on swampy ground Black Panther stumbled, and he was sent headlong on to the beast's forehead. But, through all, Dick Lothian clung grimly with knees and hands and feet.

The animal beneath him was crashing forward at a long-striding trot, his great feet moving like pistons, his ears laid back, his trunk curled under his chin. Apparently he was not thinking of Lothian on his back. His breath was coming in wheezy gasps. It was as though in the brain beneath where Dick Lothian crouched, a brain which is as mysterious and wonderful as that of any animal on earth, some urgent message had flashed. Dick Lothian, through the bewilderment of his own brain, tried to guess at it.

"The graveyard!" he said to himself in a whisper. "He's dying!"

His pulse beat faster at the thought, and at that moment the elephant burst from the darkness of the forest into a moon-flooded clearing of deep grass. Ahead the blue-grey haze of mist over water showed over the wilderness of tree-tops in the cup of a jungle valley. Black Panther had began to stagger slightly. In the moonlight Dick Lothian could see little convulsions shaking the skin of his neck, and knew that, besides Jennison's shot, the cobra which had struck at his foot had found the soft flesh, and the poison was spreading swiftly through the giant body.

"Poor brute!" Lothian murmured, a pang of pity for the dying beast, outlaw and murderer that he was, touching him.

For a second or two Black Panther stood panting on the slope of the hill, gurgling a little pitifully. Then, with a squeal he began to run, as a runaway Juggernaut car might run, down the slope towards the forest and the water. The ground trembled beneath his flying feet. In the long grass a tiger, watching a herd of deer in the distance, shrank back snarling as he flashed thunderously down the slope. Lothian, clinging like one in a bewildered dream to the neck of the elephant as it rolled and pitched like a boat on a heavy swell, saw the green glimmer of its eyes for a second. Then the moonlight and the cold, rushing winds soaked up all his impressions again.

His impressions were rapidly becoming blurred. For a space of time they crashed

through the forest again, broke through a herd of wild elephants which scattered on every side to allow of Black Panther's passage, grunting and snorting. He remembered, later, that the trunk of one of these touched his leg, and the deafening trumpeting that followed sent a queer sense of coldness down his spine. But they had left the herd behind half a minute later.

They broke from the forest again. The river, all silver grey in the moonlight, lay before them, rolling silently. Black Panther paused, standing still, swaying his trunk and whimpering softly. His forelegs gave way, and he sank to the ground with a soft, squelching noise. For a second Dick Lothian thought the end had come. Then, even as he was about to leap to the ground, the dying beast sprang up again, staggered for a moment, and, with a splash that drenched him, dropped into the river.

Twice in that strange swim across the shining river Black Panther's dying strength all but ebbed away. Dick Lothian could feel the heart of the beast beating in great wheezing throbs. A film had crept over the little red eyes. As he clambered weakly to the low bank of the river, Black Panther panted like a human being in agony.

He paused for a moment on the river bank, swaying, staggering, and dripping water. Then, with a feeble roar, he lumbered diagonally into the forest again.

"Can't last long now!" Lothian murmured, clinging fast to the great mud-caked neck, and flinching as the branch of a bamboo tree lashed him in the face.

He was scratched and bleeding, and his clothes streamed from him in ribbons, though he did not know it. Dick Lothian was not the least bit sure that he was not in the midst of a malaria-dream which would dissolve like a mist any moment.

Black Panther trumpeted weakly. A fresh impulse of strength seemed to run through his great dying body. He rolled with trunk uplifted and tail outstretched down a rocky valley that had seemed to yawn suddenly in the jungle. The moon was blotted out by a high bastion of rock. A sudden, sickening smell came on the wind to Dick Lothian. He knew, then, that it was the death's valley of all the elephants in the Doon that they were lumbering down. The thin cries of night-hawks and kites and vultures reached his ears. In the moonlit sky, above the narrow gorge which was beaten to a solid road by the feet of thousands of dying elephants, he could see the birds of prey hanging like black specks.

The gorge opened out into a huge amphitheatre. The moon shone upon a great field of whitened bones and ivory, bleached and dried and crumbling, flickered with the shadows of the birds of prey that screamed and swooped above it, nauseous with the scent of decay.

Black Panther pitched forward, flinging Dick Lothian headlong.

Dick Lothian picked himself up slowly. Black Panther lay on his right flank, quite motionless.

Dick Lothian gazed over the great expanse of bleached bones. His legs were trembling beneath him ridiculously, and the moonlight was quivering before his eyes like a bad cinematograph picture.

"Crikey!" he said, feebly.

Which was all Dick Lothian could say, inadequate as it was.

* * * * *

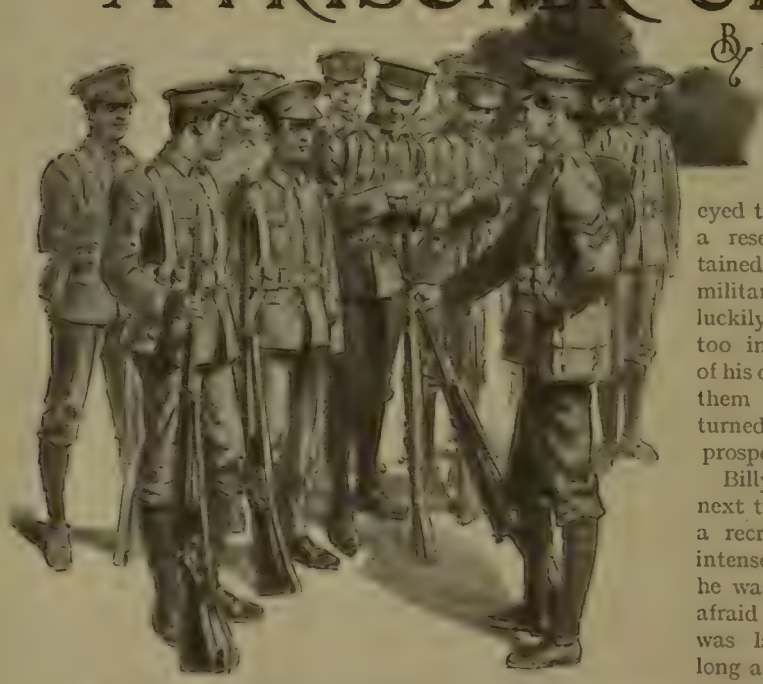
It was two days later that Dick Lothian, ragged and weak and half dazed, came across the potail and his search party as he stumbled through the jungle. He learned that Jennison lay in the village raving in malaria, having staggered out of the jungle the night before, babbling and talking incoherently. It was a month later before the two of them, Dick Lothian, forest officer, and Jennison, elephant poacher, reached Cawnpore after a long and weary journey through the jungle, Jennison weak as a child, Lothian nursing him, soaked in quinine himself.

The malaria months had to pass before a good-naturedly sceptical chief commissioner sent a little party up into the Sewalik Hills with Dick Lothian in search of the elephant cemetery. They found it with difficulty, from the bearings and observations he had made; a great hoard of ivory such as no man had ever seen before.

Jennison, broken with illness, was deported from India shortly after. The old elephant hunters of the Doon look upon Dick Lothian, chief forest officer, with awed eyes, as one who has been vouchsafed the sight of miraculous things. And he, for his part, cannot hope to forget the Jain temple and Black Panther, the rogue elephant, before his last day.

A PRISONER OF WAR

By RICHARD BIRD.



"Great Scott, you've only got one puttee on!" cried Braithwaite, and Billy went redder than ever.

"COMPANY! Slope—*h'p!* Company column on the right! Remainder, right—turn! Quick—march!"

Dipcote O.T.C. swung smartly away at the command, moving off with the precision and "swank" of a company of regulars. Major Forbes (retired) stood on the parade ground, watching with a critical eye and a sigh for the days of his youth in India. He noted every detail of his old school corps—the same alert bearing, the same keenness, the same perfect dressing and keeping step. His grim features relaxed into a smile of approval as he turned to his son, aged fourteen and a half, who was standing beside him.

"A good lot, Bill," he said. "They're as good as they used to be, and that means something. You'll join as a recruit when you come next term."

"Shall I, pater?" said Billy Forbes, rather apathetically.

"Of course you will. I should like to see everyone made to join some corps as a boy, and continue it when he grows up. Makes a man of him, y'know. One of these days I shall expect to see you a section commander—eh?"

"Yes, pater," said Billy, seeing that an affirmative answer was expected. He eyed the disappearing column with a resentful expression that contained no spark of enthusiasm, military or otherwise. His father, luckily, did not observe this, being too interested in the manœuvres of his old company. After watching them for a few more minutes he turned and walked off with the prospective Napoleon.

Billy Forbes came to Dipcote next term and was duly enrolled as a recruit. He disliked the idea intensely. This was partly because he was shy, partly because he was afraid of a gun, partly because he was lazy. His mother had died long ago, and his father had never understood nor sympathised with him. *He* had been a soldier and loved his work, therefore his son must follow in his footsteps; and as Bill had been imperfectly looked after by a repellent aunt while Colonel Forbes had lived in India, there was little knowledge or sympathy between father and son. Bill hated the drills, too. He had not yet tasted the delights of camp—indeed, he "funked" the idea, and a fortnight after being enrolled was already laying schemes to escape the camp which loomed terribly even now—nearly a year ahead. He was careless, slovenly, disinterested, an unpleasant specimen of the raw recruit yielding to superior force.

He was unlucky, too. His section-commander, a monitor called Braithwaite, was a good soldier, and a good leader under certain conditions. That is to say, he knew his job—shooting, drill, tactics—from A to Z, and loved it. But he was a martinet, modelling his style on that of his commanding officer, Mr. Patterson. The latter was one of the Dipcote staff, a man of thirty-seven, and a keen soldier. But he was a disappointed man, not having met with the headmastership he thought he deserved, and his temper had suffered. The Dipcote O.T.C. was his one great hobby, and he worked untiringly to perfect his little command. He

succeeded in a measure. The average of the company's shooting was good, and their drill and field work excellent. But Patterson was a martinet—almost a bully—and few of the corps had any real liking for the C.O. The two subs., Coulter and Johns, were younger, much more genial, and popular. But Patterson naturally ruled the roost, and this was bad for Billy Forbes.

Braithwaite did his level best to keep his section "up to the mark." This involved (quite unnecessarily) a good deal of abuse and threats. Unpolished buttons were a grave sin, and a badly wound puttee almost worthy of death. Anything below an "inner" on the target was treated with morose contempt, and a "miss" was good for three with a cane in Braither's study. This, of course, was strictly unofficial, but it stung all the same, and Billy Forbes soon grew to dislike Braither and Patter on as heartily as he disliked the corps. A typical drill would begin in this fashion, as the sergeants were proving their sections:—

"Section — 'shun! Number . . . as you were—smarter than that . . . Number . . . *as* you were . . . Stick your chest out, Forbes, look to your front, and answer smartly . . . Section, *number* . . . Form—fours. *As* you were. Jump to it, Forbes: you move like a sciatic sheep. Form—*fours* . . . *Jump* to it, you sweep. Form two-deep . . . Form—fours—Forbes again! *As* you were . . . Form—fours—Forbes again! *As* you were . . . Form — fours . . . Right . . . Left — turn . . . Step up, Forbes. Keep your wits about you . . . Section, Fix——. *As* you were. On the caution 'Fix,' Forbes, you half-witted nincompoop . . ." etc.

Treatment such as this is bad policy, even from the best of sergeants. Braithwaite, from his position in the school, and size, was able to enforce his will by sheer terror. But he was not learning leadership. For Billy Forbes it was the worst possible treatment. Beginning in pure fright, he gradually grew callous. Terrified, he tried at first to improve, found himself no better and equally slanged, and by degrees gave up caring. He learned the taste of Braithwaite's cane, and after a dose or two grew hardened. Finally he gave up trying to do much. His efforts were directed to "sliming through"—that is, do the minimum necessary to escape punishment. Consequently, it was not long before he had the reputation of being a slacker, and the slovenliest man in the corps.

He had some bad luck as well, though in the main he was responsible for his failures. When the annual inspection came round in February he was late on parade. The inspecting-adjutant, Captain Carter had not arrived; so Billy was able to amble to his place. Patterson had his back turned, luckily, and did not notice him. The company was easied at the moment, and Braithwaite was not slow to point out his fault in an undertone.

"You wretched little slacker, why the dickens d'you rot my section like this? What made you late to-day of all days?"

"Please, Braithwaite," said Billy, panting and blushing furiously (a trick he had not yet cured), "somebody had bagged one of my puttees, and I was looking for it."

"Why on earth don't you look after your kit better? Great Scott! you've only got *one* puttee on!"

It was true. The rest of the section looked, gaped, and laughed. Billy went redder than ever.

"I couldn't find it. Someone's bagged——"

"And to come on parade with only one on, on the day of the inspection!" groaned Braithwaite. "Well, it's too late to do anything now. Just get into the rear rank and try not to be conspicuous. Let's hope it won't be noticed. But I'll talk to you afterwards."

"Company—'shun!" rasped the voice of Patterson, as the adjutant came on to the ground. A minute later the inspection had begun.

Captain Carter was a keen man. This, too, was his first inspection of the Dipcote corps, and he meant to impress all ranks with his thoroughness. He opened out the ranks of each section first, and walked through, examining quickly, but with an eye that nothing escaped. Billy was spotted at once.

"One puttee, Captain Patterson," said the adjutant, stopping. Patterson glared at the discreditable recruit.

"Forgotten?" he growled.

"No, sir," mumbled Billy, shaking. "I think someone——"

But the adjutant, content with a hint of reproof, had already passed on.

The rest of the inspection proceeded on the usual lines, and Captain Carter made a complimentary but sincere speech at the end. There was no mention of Billy. The eulogy was deserved, for the corps had made an excellent show. But Patterson and Braithwaite both felt that there had been one fly in the amber, one stigma on Dipcote's fair fame, and they drove their usual home-thrusts.

"Never do anything well—slack, incapable,

untidy—not fit to be in the corps." Thus Patterson.

"Lazy little hog. Spoilt my section. Ruined the inspection. Bring me that cane." Thus Braithwaite.

What wonder that Billy was not enthusiastic on military matters?

"I hate Patterson, I hate Braithwaite, and I hate the whole show," groaned Billy to the nearest approach to a chum he had made. "I'm sick of the thing, and I've a good mind to run away."

"Don't be an ass," said the friend. "It's your own fault. Wait for camp. That's ripping fun. You'll enjoy that."

"What! in camp with Patterson and Braither over me! Is it likely?"

"There's Coulter and Johns. They're decent chaps. If we get out with either of them for a field day we shall be all right. Probably stand us lemonade or something."

"You bet *I'll* get none if they do," said the pessimist. "I wish to goodness I wasn't going to camp."

But of course he went: his father saw to that. Camp passed off much better than he expected. It was new: it was rather fun: he was finding his feet a bit more. Besides, he had begun to understand something more of the drill, to anticipate orders, to "jump to it" in the approved style. Discipline had smartened him up a trifle, and even Braithwaite was in a better temper. When he was put on brigade-guard one night Billy began to feel that he was growing up. He marched off with his fellows to the guard-tent, almost without a grumble. After all, this was something like the real thing. He was by way of being a *man*. He had a gun that would really fire, and a bayonet, and by this time he was no longer gun-shy. And he was to mount guard in uniform while the camp was sleeping. That would smack something of the heroic. Not so bad after all.

It did seem heroic, fine, attractive while in the guard tent with his friends, while doing sentry-go in the daylight with a fixed bayonet, saluting at proper times, even challenging an entering grocer. He was on guard, helping to look after lives and property. For the first time he began to feel some of the pride of responsibility. When he was relieved he was almost sorry. A great moment.

And then he had to mount guard at midnight. At midnight! Twelve o'clock midnight! There was no need to rouse him, for none of the guard had tried to snatch any sleep: they were new at the game and saw only the fun. Billy was marched to his post by the corporal on duty, warned not to get a wink of sleep as he valued his life, reminded that this day there was a countersign—"Salamanca"—without which no one was to pass, and, finally, left to his own devices. He was posted some three hundred yards from the guard-tent, at the bend of a road leading up an incline past the camp. On one side of him were open fields, on the other a hill covered with young fir-trees. There was no moon; only faint starlight made grim shapes half visible and tricked the eyes with ghostly guessing.

As the corporal and sentry who had been relieved marched off, Billy suddenly felt very lonely. Ten minutes before, in the cheery guard tent, the candle lit, and his garrulous fellows all talking at once, this mimic warfare had seemed almost desirable. Now he was left alone, relying entirely on himself, alone in the night. Strange noises stirred in the wood he fronted: of course they were only birds or beasts moving. Of *course* they were, he told himself. They *must* be. All the same, they *might* be gipsies, wild fellows on the road, who would think nothing of knocking him on the head if it took their fancy. Billy shivered inside his great-coat. For the sake of doing something he began to tramp up and down the fifty yards of his beat, rifle at the slope. His heart beat a little faster as he marched, for he was only fifteen, and midnight has terrors for the solitary, especially near a wood.

Ah—h—h! what was that? He stopped dead as a clacking noise came down the road. A moment of suspense, and then dread certainty. It was a man on a horse, trotting. What did a man want riding at that hour? Bill quavered a challenge as the horse drew near. To his intense relief the man took no notice, but trotted on. Had he known it was the local doctor returning home from an urgent call he would have laughed at his fears. As it was he was merely glad to have been ignored. And so ten minutes crept slowly by.

Presently his pricked ears heard steps approaching. Again his heart bumped painfully. Quick reasoning told him it could not be Grand or Visiting Rounds, for they would never come *up* the road. It must be a stranger—perhaps more than one. He would have to challenge him if he turned and approached the entrance to the camp. It must be two men; perhaps three burglars on the prowl. Possibly cut-throats! If anyone laughs at such fears, let him imagine himself a boy of fifteen, alone, near a wood, at midnight. The steps came

closer. It was only one man after all. Billy felt now that he wished there were more. *One* might be a murderer. Still he had a good deal of shy pride and his drills and discipline had stiffened him. Billy gasped silently, brought his rifle down to the "Engage," and said: "Halt! who comes there?" The man said "Friend," and Billy felt immense relief as he recognised the voice of Patterson. He almost said "Pass, friend. All's well"; but remembered in the nick of time. Instead, he said stoutly: "Stand, friend, and give the countersign." Then he waited for the word "Salamanca," but there was silence.

Patterson, in point of fact, had forgotten the countersign. He had had an extremely busy day of organisation and inspecting ground over which they were to manœuvre on the morrow. A countersign is very rarely used, and he reflected with a wry smile that it had been at his own suggestion they had adopted one to-day, to accustom the sentries to its use. He searched his brains to no purpose; the word had completely slipped his memory. Then he bethought him that this would be an extra test of his corps' efficiency.

"I've forgotten the countersign, Forbes," he said, walking forward. "That will be all right."

Billy hesitated. He knew that the countersign ought to be given. On the other hand, it seemed ridiculous to hold up his own C.O. because he had forgotten. Ought he to halt Patterson, march him up to the guard-tent, or shout for the guard to turn out? It seemed too melodramatic a course. So he said, "Pass, friend: all's well," and began to tramp up and down his beat once more.

The friend passed. But within five minutes the corporal of the guard appeared with a file. One of the file was told to relieve Billy. The other marched behind him to the guard-tent. On expressing his surprise at so early a relief he was told to shut up as he was going to catch it. Billy obeyed, wondering what was up. When the little party reached the tent he understood. Patterson was standing up, frowning, talking to the sergeant. Two candles lent a dim light. The other members of the guard were sitting up expectantly on their mattresses. The corporal saluted, reported, and fell out, as did the escort. Billy was left standing facing Patterson.

"You let a man pass without giving the countersign just now?" began Patterson, abruptly

"Yes, sir," said Billy. "I knew it was you, so I thought it would be all right."

"You had no business to think. You were given definite orders, and you should have obeyed. It didn't matter whether you recognised me or not. Your duty was to halt even the King if he had forgotten the countersign, turn out the guard, or march him as a prisoner up here."

"I didn't know——"

"You ought to have known. You've been in the corps six months: you had express and direct orders. Supposing the Commandant had paid a surprise visit and the same thing had happened, what would he have thought of the Dipcote sentries, the Dipcote discipline?"

"I'm sorry, sir——"

"It's no good being sorry. If this were the first occasion of failure I should not mind so much. But you have been consistently lazy, careless, and slack since you were enrolled. Your business is to do as you're told. Just remember that in future, if not for your own sake, at least for the credit of the corps."

There was a silence. Then Billy said: "May I go back now, sir?"

"Where to?"

"To my post, sir."

"Certainly not. You've failed once for to-night. Better have a trustworthy sentry in your place. Let him get to bed now, sergeant, that's the best place for an idiot."

The martinet withdrew. Billy crept miserably to his mattress and lay down, bitterness at his heart.

* * * * *

"Hello, young 'un!" said Coulter, the senior sub., next morning, as he met Billy returning from a pre-breakfast bathe. "You look rather glum, considering it's such a jolly morning. What's up?"

It was the first decent greeting Billy had heard for some time, and it moved him. He felt almost like blubbing, but fiercely set his jaw. No more blubbing for him, he told himself, savagely. The beasts shouldn't see that, anyhow.

"Oh, nothing, sir!" he said, scowling.

Coulter took his arm.

"Don't be an ass," he said genially. "What's the row? Up for orderly room, eh?"

"No, sir."

"Then what is it? Come on; I'd like to be of use if I can."

"Nothing, sir, thank you."

Coulter tactfully dropped the arm and the subject.

"Righto!" he said. "If you'd rather run it yourself, do. I dare say you're right. But if

you want a leg up any time, just ask me, and I'll be proud."

He said no more, and Billy was grateful. But next day, when field operations were in progress, Coulter took care to pick out Billy and send him scouting. He nursed him carefully in an unostentatious way the rest of the camp, but did not ask any more questions. He knew there was no good in forcing confidences. But in every little way that was possible he did his utmost to give "a leg-up" to the black sheep of the company. He gave him tips on scouting; he coached his shooting with painstaking and kindly care; he dropped a judicious word of praise whenever it was possible; he even gave him occasional manual exercises by himself, doing his best to be patient when Bill was unusually stupid or slow; he showed him the easiest methods of buffing a bayonet and polishing buttons; he pricked a foot-blister and gave bounteously of boracic powder. In every way that was possible, in short, he tried to help Bill see that the duty of soldiering could be enjoyable, and that he owed it to his self-respect to enjoy it, or at least do the best he could. Coulter did all this for two reasons—he was sorry for a black sheep, and he was keen on the corps.

The treatment did not stop at the end of the camp. Next term, and every term after, Coulter kept a special eye on Bill and did his best to help him up the ladder. It was a slow business, for all growth is slow. By degrees Coulter and Bill came to understand each other, and after about a year Bill found himself talking to Coulter as a pal. Once he made an effort to express thanks, but Coulter cut him short with: "That's all right. If you want to thank me, stick in at the corps work. I'd like to see you a sergeant before you leave." And Bill, who had really been trying to do better for months, vowed to himself that he would do his best. He did, and a very good best it was. He never got sergeant's stripes at Dipcote, as it happened, but he became a very fair shot and a first-rate scout. And at the end of two years he could say to a friend: "Jove! this has been a top-hole camp, hasn't it?"

"Rather!" agreed the friend — Adams. "Ripping weather, ripping bathing, and ripping chaps."

"*And* a ripping O.C.," corrected Bill, loyally.

"Yes. Coulter's A 1 — much better than Patterson."

(By this time Mr. Patterson had obtained the promotion long sought, having become head of a big day school some thirty miles away. Coulter in the natural order of events had succeeded to the captaincy.)

"I should think so! Patterson was a brute. A clever brute, but a brute. I never got my own back for the dog's time he gave me."

"You never will now," said Adams.

"I suppose not. If it hadn't been for Coulter I should have—well, goodness knows. Come on, and get an ice."

Another year passed, and it was the summer term again. Bill had developed amazingly. He was now eighteen, a monitor, and corporal. A man of standing, with the right to fag, sure of himself, straight-backed, cured of blushing, able to give an order, and make his squad "jump to it" in approved fashion; but something more besides. He remembered his own recruit days, and never bullied an awkward cub. He was obeyed promptly, and he was liked. If it had not been that a fellow had stayed on unexpectedly he would have been full sergeant and in charge of a section. He was a little disappointed, of course, but now he was grown-up and made the best of it. He felt that he "knew his job," and he enjoyed the job. And in the fulness of time he contrived, through pure chance and presence of mind, to get some of his own back.

On a day in June Billy found himself crouching in a ditch, together with his friends Private Adams and Private Spence. They were three units of nearly a thousand fighting men, for it was a big field day. Not only Dipcote, but some eight or nine other schools within a radius of fifty miles were conducting operations. The armies were divided into Blue and Red. Blue were defending a position, of which the key was a hill dominating a bridge. Their front covered about a mile, and their numbers were some three hundred. Red, among whom was the Dipcote contingent, were the attacking force, trying to drive them back, and had nearly seven hundred. Dipcote were on the extreme right flank, and the battle had been in progress over an hour. The defending force was under the command of no less a personage than Mr. Patterson, who still retained his enthusiasm for things military; Red were commanded by an alien—one Captain Soames. His scheme, in brief, was to make a strong demonstration—almost an attack pressed home—on the left flank. Then, under cover of heavy artillery fire and a concealed and extensive line of skirmishers, to move the bulk of his troops quickly over to the right flank, making use of a deep belt of trees to hide his operations. Troops had begun to move. Dipcote had been

idle all the morning, lying on a hillside, waiting their turn. They were to lead the attack when the opportunity came.

Coulter had sent out Bill and the two privates to scout. Adams had just returned, having got into touch with the Blue scouts. Bill sent him back to Coulter to report. Then he turned to Spence.

"You stay here, and keep your eyes skinned," he said. "I'm going to move out more to the right, and see if I can get closer in, and perhaps behind them. If they seem to be getting too near, go back and tell Coulter. I shall come in as soon as it's necessary."

"Righto!" said Spence, making himself more comfortable in the ditch, which was, providentially, dry. "Nothing very exciting yet."

"No; but there may be soon. Don't go to sleep in the sun, whatever else you do. They may be moving over here presently. The firing sounds a bit less."

Rifle at the trail, and keeping well under cover of the hedge, Bill moved off cautiously on his scouting mission. Five minutes brought him to the end of the hedge, and there he paused to watch. There was no sign of the enemy's scouts, but it behoved him to move warily. So he crossed the next field on his stomach, there being no cover to speak of, and he was glad it was a small field. Here he came on a little belt of trees, which he avoided in favour of a friendly wagon of hay. This was going along the road. Bill climbed up on the off-side by permission of the driver, and drove comfortably along, lying on top of the hay. There he got an excellent view without any danger of detection.

He drove along for nearly a quarter of a mile, and then judged it time to get off. He must be well outside the Blue scouts—right in their rear. Up a hedge he stole, invisible to all but the keenest eyes and glasses in his khaki. Presently he came on a scout—he was the outermost man—and watched him peacefully from behind a stack. When the coast was clear he advanced as before. And in due time he found himself unnoticed a couple of hundred yards in rear of the Blue left flank. Bill lay down and took stock of their dispositions. His plan was to observe for ten minutes, see if Blue had got wind of Red's scheme, and were also moving troops across as a counter-stroke, and then go back to report. He lay quite still in a clump of ferns, watching the Blue flank firing. Presently he saw half a company coming over in extended order.

"You're my prisoner, sir!" The master turned with a start, and saw a corporal whom he did not recognise, covering him with his rifle.

"Aha!" said Bill to himself, and prepared to move. He determined to wait a few minutes yet, however, and while he was waiting and watching two figures walked rapidly towards the ferns.

"Nabbed!" thought Bill, but he lay still and hoped.

His hopes were justified, for the figures paused some thirty yards from him, and surveyed the ground to the left. One, Bill guessed,

must be an umpire, from his cap. The other Bill recognised—it was the Blue commander, and his old friend, Patterson. Bill smiled sourly.

"Gosh!" he thought. "How I should like to fling a stone at the brute!"

And then, quick as thought, a plan came to him, and he almost gasped with joy. Patterson was a considerable distance from the nearest section, whose backs, of course, were towards him. In point of fact, Patterson had been well served by his scouts and his own acumen. He had divined Soames's plan, and was even now hurrying men across to thwart it. He was surveying the left flank for himself to select strategic points, and—he had no suspicion that Bill had wormed his way to within fifteen yards.

"You're my prisoner, sir," said a voice.

Patterson turned round with a start, and saw a corporal, whom at first he did not recognise, covering him with his rifle.

"Eh—what? What's this?" stuttered Patterson. "Who are you—who are you?"

"One of the Red scouts, sir. Got in behind your men. I'm afraid you'll have to come back with me, sir."

"Nonsense — nonsense!" said Patterson, breezily, trying to bluff. "Just go back to your own corps at once. You've no business here. Go back at once."

"Isn't he a prisoner of war, sir?" said Bill, turning to the umpire.

He was standing up now. He knew that if any chance Blue man saw him it would be taken for granted he was a Blue scout reporting to the commander. The umpire smiled.

"I'm afraid he's right, Patterson," he said. "You're his prisoner. Your scouts haven't been sharp enough."

Patterson was sensible enough to accept the situation.

"Oh, well," he said, trying to laugh; "I suppose I must give way. But there's no need to march me in to your commander, is there? If I give you my word not to take part in any further operations—that will do, won't it?"

"I'm afraid not, sir," said Bill, respectfully. "If you hand over your command the show will go on as before. But if you come back with me no one will know where the G.O.C. is, and everything will be in confusion. No one will know whom to look for, or what orders are to be given. My business is to confuse Blue as much as possible. Of course, sir," he added, turning to the umpire, "you won't give it away?"

"Certainly not," smiled the umpire. "It's war, Colonel Patterson, you know."

And half an hour later, when the Blue army was in utter confusion, and being driven back at all points, a weary colonel was brought in to Captain Soames by a triumphant corporal.

"And—oh, Adams!" said Bill, with tearful laughter that night, "if you'd only seen his face! Thank goodness I was made to join the corps!"

THE END

"Hullo, kids! You'll find some chocolates on the table."
"Oh! thanks awfully." (They help themselves liberally.) "But aren't you going to have any?"
"No, thanks. You see, they aren't mine."

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

A Story of Mystery and Adventure in Tibet

By HERBERT STRANG

Illustrated by RENÉ BULL

Synopsis of Opening Instalments

THREE young tea-planters in Assam—Bob Jackson, Dick Forrester, and Alan Mackenzie—are camping one night after a tiger hunt, when from the jungle an Englishman staggers towards them in a delirious fever. They learn that he is a Captain Redfern, who had set out to explore the buried cities in Chinese Turkestan with an archæologist named Beresford, and they gather that he has escaped from some great peril, leaving his companion a prisoner in unknown hands. A rough plan is the only guide they find to the whereabouts of Beresford, but they set out to rescue him, leaving Redfern in the care of a neighbouring planter. As they start two Chinamen ask to accompany them as far as their ways lie together. The younger seems to be under some mysterious spell exercised by the other (a one-armed man named Wen Shih), for whom he acts as interpreter, and once, when alone with Forrester, he declares that he is a mandarin's son in the power of Wen Shih, and implores the Englishman to rescue him.

On the third night they come upon an encampment of natives, who live in constant dread of the power of some mysterious "Eye." Their terror spreads to the explorers' own native carriers, who refuse to go farther. Accompanied only by their cook and a shikari, the three reach an immense waterfall, and follow a pathway leading to a rift in a steep precipice. They proceed along this passage until suddenly a high iron shutter drops behind them. They find themselves prisoners in a Chinese fastness, the supreme ruler of which—a man apparently of immense age—wears a mitre bearing an eye-shaped ornament from which a mysterious ray of destructive light can be made to flash forth. The old man decrees that the captives shall spend their lives in the service of the Temple of the Eye.

Later they encounter an Indian girl, who gives to Forrester a piece of mica-like substance, saying, "It saves from the Eye, sahib." Soon the prisoners are separated, and Forrester is led to an underground cave, in which he sees a number of human figures, one of whom, an Englishman, comes forward to greet him.

CHAPTER XI

ALCHEMY

"REDFERN got through?"

The question was like a knife in Forrester's heart.

"Yes, Redfern got through," he repeated, wearily. "Your name is Beresford?"

"It is. Where is Redfern? Have you disposed of that ancient scarecrow above?"

"I am a prisoner like yourself."

The elder man gasped.

"Has he cast his spell over all of you?" he cried. "A British force conquered by a conjuring trick? For Heaven's sake explain yourself!"

"There is no British force. It is a long story I have to tell you."

"Come along over here, then. There's only one poor idiot who *can* understand you beside myself, and he's so desperately cowed that I doubt whether he *will*. Now, sit here; you won't catch cold; the whole place is warm, as I dare say you have discovered."

Beresford's brusque manner, quick speech, and robust personality acted as a tonic upon Forrester. Already he felt invigorated. The mystery of the place evidently had no terrors

for this sturdy Englishman. Forrester had vaguely expected that the archæologist would be old, dry, bent, and spectacled; the actual man was of middle height, athletic in build, under forty years of age, with a heavy brown beard and moustache, and the large, deep eyes that are the index to a mind at once eager and reflective.

They squatted side by side on the rocky floor. Beyond them, Forrester caught sight of the drooping figure of the young Chinaman (Wen Shih's companion), and several older Chinamen, clearly prisoners. Near the entrance to the cave were two Negritos with spears, and, in a pagoda-shaped sentry-box, a priest of the second order.

"I didn't choose my company," said Beresford, with a laugh. "Now forge ahead; I won't interrupt you if I can help it."

It was soon evident that to listen long without interrupting was impossible to this impetuous spirit. He was patient enough while Forrester related the strange manner of his meeting Redfern, only ejaculating, "Poor dear old chap!" when he heard of the captain's illness. But, as Forrester was recounting the preliminary stages of the expedition, he broke in:—

"Cut that, if you don't mind. Hitch on again at your discovery of the rift."

"Yes; there's a good deal in between, but—well, the people here were warned of our coming by Wen Shih, who——"

"Wen Shih—who is he? I suppose he comes into the part you've skipped. Wait, though, I know the name. Of course—that broken-hearted young fellow over there mentioned him; seemed in two minds whether to hate or love him. But he has been here only since yesterday. He's young, and I hope to make a man of him yet. But I'm interrupting. Do go on."

Forrester was too much pleased with this cheery being to resent being hustled. He went on to relate the closing scenes of the party's journey through the rift, their awakening in the rock chamber above, and the dreadful ceremony in the temple. His voice faltered as he spoke of the beam of light and its effect.

"Ah! That's new to me," said Beresford, more gravely than he had yet spoken. "That's dashed bad. You're sure it wasn't a Maskelyne and Devant trick?"

"Quite sure. There could be no possible doubt about it."

"That's what they really mean by the Eye, then. I took it to be the eye of that ridiculous creature on the wall. That old villain above is more ingenious than I fancied him. I regarded him as a mere clever bag of bones, togged up—a sort of music-hall comedian with a straight face. But please go on."

The rest of Forrester's story was soon told.

"Well, don't be downhearted," Beresford said, gripping his shoulder with the rough vigour of a friendly bear. "The August and Venerable sent me here, too, to learn wisdom; we'll learn it together! I have been here three days——"

"Did you come down a staircase, with Negritos and a priest behind?" asked Forrester, remembering the strange procession across the rift wall.

"I did. There's no other way. But why did you ask?"

"Because we saw you—what looked like half-dressed skeletons slanting down the wall. When we found that the wall was solid, without steps, we were flabbergasted."

"I dare say," Beresford rejoined, with a smile. "You will learn more wisdom here than our ancient friend upstairs reckons for."

"But why didn't you feel the same ghastly creepiness as we did?"

"I'll tell you. It was *because I knew what the old villain was up to.* That knowledge was a wonderful talisman against his tricks. And what's more, *he didn't know that I knew,* or—after what you have told me about his murderous eye—I should without doubt have been resolved into molecules before this. Like you, I was allowed to go up daily to the plateau—by the way, they employ a marvellously effective system of intensive cultivation there. Like you, I refused to dig. Unluckily one day I lost my temper with one of his bald-headed priests, it doesn't matter why, and I knocked the fellow down. They hauled me into the temple, and tried to lift me on to that pedestal you spoke of, supposing no doubt that the green-eyed monster and the surroundings generally had crumpled me up—that mist, for instance, a magnificent bit of stage management. But I sent one of the fellows spinning with my right and the other with my left, and marched straight up to the throne—it's pure gold, by the way—and shook my fist in the August and Venerable face, telling him what I thought of him and his crew. I am bound to say he stood it well. He didn't blink an eyelid; there wasn't a tremor in his silvery old voice when he reeled off, in surprisingly good English, a rigmarole about the Law of the Eye. I told him I didn't care a tinker's curse for the Law of the Eye. That was enough to rouse him, but the wonderful old creature wouldn't be roused. He simple yarned on about learning wisdom and the

power of the Eye, shrouded himself in his vapour, and disappeared like a dissolving view. Then I was brought here."

"I wonder you came!" Forrester exclaimed, envying the speaker's boldness, and burning to hear the secret of it.

"Well, I wanted to see all there was to be seen," Beresford replied simply. "I didn't know, of course, that I couldn't get back, and I might have acted differently if he had given an exhibition of the power of the Eye for my benefit; I suppose there was no criminal on hand at the moment. As soon as I got here I saw his intention was to give me a stronger dose of his horrors; he is a perfect epicure in punishments. But there was no occasion for panic. I've known Redfern for twenty odd years—he was my fag at school—and I would have given long odds that he would worry through somehow, send up a relief party, and give the old reprobate what-for. I've every confidence even now that he will—if he lives. We may be here longer than I expected; but we can stand two years of it, perhaps three."

"You mean that even if we are not taken above and pulverised, we are in mortal danger here?" Forrester asked.

"Certainly; but not of instant death, unless we make fools of ourselves. The length of the process depends on your constitution. Not one of those poor wretches yonder has been here more than four years, and that's exceptional. That young fellow, the last comer—his name is Wing Wu, by the way; did you ever hear such a name?—he will hardly last out a year; he hasn't the stamina for it."

"But what is the mystery, then?" asked Forrester, astonished at the calmness with which this intrepid fellow seemed to envisage a certain death. "People have lived much longer than four years underground."

"Never in such a dungeon as this. Come with me."

He led Forrester across the cave until they came to a spot whence the floor shelved down steeply to the wall. That part of the wall which was below the general level of the floor was brightly luminous, and on its green surface Forrester saw, as on a screen, the shadowy forms of fishes and aquatic reptiles flitting hither and thither. Watching them curiously, he was astonished when, at one and the same moment, they dispersed with a rapidity betokening terror—some to the right, some to the left. For an instant the screen was left blank, then there appeared upon it a monstrous skeletonised form, somewhat resembling the fantastic creatures depicted on the walls of the temple, and on the wall of his own cell. It combined in one shape all the most hideous features of the alligator, the rhinoceros, and the dogfish immensely magnified. Involuntarily, Forrester started back as the figure came close up to the wall, and seemed to be looking through it, as the fish in an aquarium look through the glass of their tank. But it was a shape only; its eyes could not be seen.

"What is it?" Forrester asked, in a whisper.

"I don't know," his companion responded. "It is not one of any of the species of icthyosaurus that I have ever seen; but it is liker that reptile than to any other known creature."

"But isn't that extinct? Don't they find merely the fossil remains of it?"

"Who is to say that any creature is extinct? Scarcely a year passes but some explorer finds, in some remote, neglected region, what is to him a new type, but in reality, no doubt, dates back to an antiquity beyond computation. This hideous creature seems to be the last of his kind; I have seen no sign of a mate; and *his* extinction would not be much of a loss."

"How can we see him at all through the wall, just as we saw you coming down here three days ago?"

"Does no explanation occur to you?"

"Well, of course, I have heard of X-rays, and things of that kind, but——"

"Exactly. Excuse my interruption, but I know what you were going to say. You were going to speak of cathodes, and vacuum-tubes, and phosphorescent screens, and——"

"I wasn't," said Forrester. "I never heard of them."

"It comes to the same thing," Beresford went on, imperturbably, and Forrester felt a little sorry that the man of cheery good fellowship was for the time sunk in the man of science. "Here there is none of the elaborate apparatus of the experimenter, but Nature has been experimenting through ages beyond count. What do our men of science know of the real nature of the X-rays? Next to nothing. They can produce them, that is all. And here, before our eyes, we have phenomena produced, not by man but by the Great Artificer of the universe. Those creatures are swimming in the lake which you skirted just now. Their images are cast in some marvellous way upon this particular portion of the wall. I know no more than you the explanation, but—— My dear fellow, pardon me; this is not a lecture-room. Come, I have something more to show you."

They recrossed the cavern, which was as broad as it was high, and, turning a corner, were confronted by the arch-like opening of a passage. It was much more brightly illuminated by green light than the cavern out of which it led. Passing under the arch, the two men walked quickly up the passage, which twisted to right and left at every few yards, and inclined gradually upward.

"I feel very rummy," said Forrester, after a while; "the sort of tingling you have before a severe thunderstorm."

"I feel it, too," his companion responded. "Not so intensely as you, perhaps. The thing is to keep as tight a hold on yourself as you can—as you ought to have done when that old sinner above hypnotised you."

"But——"

"Now don't talk. We shall have plenty of opportunities of discussing him, and hypnotism, and a thousand and one things. Take a grip of yourself, and *will* that the mephitic influences shall not affect you. You won't thoroughly succeed, but the effort will be good."

The feeling of tenseness increased as they advanced. To Forrester it seemed as though a hot band were tightening round his temples. But he kept silence. Glancing at Beresford, he perceived on his face an expression of grim, almost savage determination. They went on, the passage becoming lighter moment by moment, until after they had walked perhaps a hundred yards it widened out into a cavern, much less spacious than that which they had left, but almost as light as open ground at noonday. At the edge of it Beresford halted.

"Stand here, and watch," he said.

In the centre of the floor there was a large square slab of some dark substance—the only spot in the cavern through which the green rays did not, as it were, percolate. It was about three feet each way, and stood a few inches above the floor. Upon it lay a coil of thin, yellow-green chain, like an immense brass watch-guard tinged with verdigris, and an oblong lump about a foot in length, and of the same colour. A few feet above, a stout bar of yellow metal projected from the wall of the cavern, having at its free end, exactly over the centre of the slab, a wheel over which another chain hung.

These objects first caught Forrester's attention, no doubt because they formed a group in the centre of an otherwise bare floor; but they held it only for a moment or two. His eyes were diverted to a living figure. From a hitherto unnoticed recess on his left hand came a bent, decrepit, cadaverous Chinaman, to all appearances very old, carrying a thin, square plate, in colour a dirty greenish-grey. He toddled slowly towards the slab, looking neither to right nor left; laid the plate upon it, and passed through a hole in the centre of the plate what seemed to be a small catch in the aforesaid lump of metal. This latter he attached to the chain hanging over the wheel.

This done, he moved to one side, and standing at a distance of about ten feet from the slab, pulled at the chain which lay upon it, and which, as Forrester now saw, was fastened to a stout ring in its upper edge. The slab moved on hinges slowly towards the Chinaman, and as it rose from the floor a shaft of pale green light, blinding in its brilliance, shot up to the roof, fourteen or fifteen feet above, causing the two Englishmen to start back and retreat some paces into the passage. Forrester was conscious of an intensification of his nervous excitement: his ears buzzed, his skin tingled as if he were in an electric bath; his impulse was to cover his eyes and rush headlong to escape the terrible glare and its psychical accompaniment. But seeing Beresford venturing back by degrees, he exerted his will to the utmost, and followed him.

The Chinaman, who was probably at the outset less nervously organised than they, and was certainly inured to the conditions, was carefully paying out the chain over the wheel, with its weighted plate, into a hole in the floor. As Forrester now perceived, the two chains were one, which was much longer than had appeared when it was coiled up. When it was stretched to its full length, it rose vertically from the slab to the bar, ran through hooks in this for a few feet, then descended perpendicularly over the wheel. The Chinaman drew back, and leant against the wall in the relaxed attitude of one waiting. To the Englishmen, in this overpowering atmosphere, the period of inaction seemed an hour; it was really about five minutes. Then the Chinaman approached the chain, taking care to remain as far as possible from the hole, and with careful deliberateness hauled it in, moving backward as he did so. Forrester waited with feverish impatience as it clinked inch by inch over the wheel. When at last the square plate came to the top, the Chinaman raised it until there was room for the slab to pass beneath it, and prevented it from slipping down over the wheel by hooking the chain to the wall, leaving, however, the greater part of the chain free.

Then, with a quickness all the more surprising because of his slow movements hitherto, he

rushed with bent head at the slab, gave it one vigorous push, and darted back to the wall, catching at the chain in time to prevent the slab from falling violently. When it was settled in its place, and the blinding glare was shut off, the old man sank to the floor as if to rest after tremendous exertions.

At first Forrester felt keen disappointment. Without a definite expectation he had anticipated some striking phenomenon as the result of this elaborate performance. The plate, whose upper surface was towards him, seemed after its long descent to be exactly as it was before; there was no change in it, nor had it brought anything up from the pit into which it had been plunged. But after a few minutes had passed the Chinaman turned it over, and Forrester was mildly surprised to perceive that the under surface had changed its colour. It was now greenish yellow, like the chain, the bar, and all the other parts of the machinery. But in his half-dazed condition he did not yet suspect the extraordinary character of the transformation.

The Chinaman reversed the plate, fastened it again to the chain, and went through the same series of careful movements as before. During the second period of waiting, Forrester, prompted by his companion, followed with his eyes the vertical path of the shaft of light from the hole to the roof. He noticed there an aperture corresponding in size to the hole. A little fine dust was falling from this aperture, like soot from a chimney, into and around the opening of the pit, the minute particles dancing and glistening like the motes in a sunbeam.

When the plate came up the second time, its colour was the same on both sides. The Chinaman unhooked it, carried it across the cavern into the recess, and reappeared with a similar plate, dull and lustreless as the first had been.

Beresford drew Forrester away, and hurried him back through the passage, saying nothing until they regained the larger cavern. Then he halted, clutched the lapels of Forrester's coat, and said:—

"Well, what do you think of that?"

"I don't understand," Forrester replied, something in his companion's manner convicting him of stupidity.

The slab moved slowly on its hinges, then suddenly from the floor a shaft of pale green light, blinding in its brilliance, shot up to the roof.

Beresford smiled.

"I don't wonder," he said. "You have seen what the alchemists from Trismegistus to Roger Bacon spent their lives in fruitless efforts to discover, and what Paracelsus would have given the world to see. You have seen lead transmuted into gold! That is the Old Man of the Mountain's secret. Come along to my particular nook; I will tell you all I know."

CHAPTER XII

EXPLANATIONS AND DISCOVERIES

"I WISH I had my pipe," growled Beresford, as Forrester sat beside him against the wall of the cavern. "Good cut-bar is wasted on the desiccated old anatomy up above. However! Redfern and I, as you know, had gone to Chinese Turkestan for a few months' excavating. You have heard of the sand-buried ruins of Khotan. No? Well, seven or eight hundred miles north-west of us, between the vast Turkestan desert and the icy Kara-Kash ranges, there is an oasis stretching some three hundred miles from east to west, known as the Oasis of Khotan. You think of an oasis, I dare say, as a verdant, beautiful spot. Khotan is not that. There *is* verdure; the people grow crops; but a great part of the district is simply dust. During long periods of time the sand of the desert has swept across it, destroying, and yet preserving, cities that were once the flourishing centres of an advanced civilisation. That smacks rather of the lecture-room, I'm afraid. Lecturing is my shop, of course.

"Well, not to bore you, excavations have been going on at Khotan, bringing to light highly artistic objects—vases, frescoes, coins, ivories, and so on—which prove that it was, long ago, the seat of an Indian Buddhist civilisation. Redfern and I had looked forward to making some interesting finds, but we never dreamed of the one we did actually make. We were poking about in a heap of decomposed rubbish and humus, among fragments of pottery, bones of animals, chips of rotten wood, copper coins, and what not, when I suddenly spotted a painted tablet like nothing we had yet come upon. I picked it up, and, scraping away the accretions of siliceous matter that defaced it—my dear fellow, the mere thought of it sets me all of a jigget even now—under that layer, I say, I found a strip of paper about eight inches by three, torn at one corner, and covered with a few lines of writing in what we call cursive Central Asian Brahmi.

"It was a beautiful specimen, at least twelve hundred years old, and valuable enough on that account; but when I came to decipher it—if one *can* jump out of one's skin, I nearly did so. It was a letter, apparently from father to son, a sort of deathbed farewell, and it gave him detailed directions for a journey to the far side of the Himalayas—that is to say, the southern side—to a spot where lead could be transmuted into gold! Redfern pooh-poohed it, chanted 'Rowley-powley, gammon, and spinach,' like a schoolboy, and, when I ventured to suggest there *might* be something in it, was so rude that I reminded him of what I should have done twenty years ago if my fag had cheeked me. However, I was very patient, and after much persuasion I got him to agree to make a start for the place on the off-chance that the story was something more than a fable.

"We set off with a miscellaneous crew of Turki natives, following the every explicit directions on the paper. But the country was so extraordinarily difficult, and the hardships so great, that our escort deserted one after another. We replaced them when we could with fellows picked up *en route*—Tibetans most of them; but these, too, when it came to crossing the passes of the Himalayas, funked it, and ultimately we were left with a single follower, a Tibetan, a regular brick of a fellow.

"I won't tell you what we went through; after all, we couldn't expect a walk over! Unluckily, the paper was torn at the corner, as I said, and I believe the missing portion described the exact locality of the spot we were making for. Without it, we were at a loss, and wandered a few miles farther south than we ought to have done, until we fell in with some little forest people who told us about a mysterious region beyond a gigantic waterfall, which they were afraid to approach because of the Eye. That seemed promising! We made tracks for the fall, just as you did; we found the rift, marched up it, saw the canoes, and flattered ourselves that we hould be ore long be in a position to verify or disprove the ancient legend.

"I led the way, our Tibetan came next, Redfern brought up the rear. We kept a good look-out, of course; but had no suspicion of danger until I heard the clang of the shutter behind me. They had dropped it a minute too soon! The Tibetan and I were shut in; Redfern was shut out; they hadn't seen him, fifty yards or so behind, round the bend. What followed was pretty much as you described your own experiences. I had just time to fire off my revolver in a way that Redfern would understand as a warning, before the gas overcame me. My Tibetan was already unconscious. I never saw him again.

"Next day they took me into the temple, and I had a very interesting interview with the August and Venerable. As I told you, he did not turn on the Eye for my benefit; indeed, he was very courteous and suave, and I didn't pay much attention to his exposition of the

Law of the Eye. It was only when I had committed the unpardonable offence of knocking down his priests, and he sent me down here, that I thought him anything but a plausible old humbug with ogreish tendencies.

"Prepared as I was, his little hypnotic tricks with the green eye had made no impression on me. The general atmosphere of mystery, and what I learned from the people on the plateau, convinced me that he was hiding some precious secret below stairs, and the sight of his golden throne made me suspect its nature. Never in my life was I better pleased than when they brought me down their subterranean stairs to learn wisdom! And I hadn't been here an hour before my suspicions became certainty. That Chinaman yonder will be engaged all day in letting lead plates down into the pit, and drawing them up pure gold. The plates are brought down from above; they explain the knocking you heard from the building near the old iniquity's pagoda. There is not a tool of any kind here—nothing but chop-sticks, even, for eating our food; the lead is cut and hammered into plates above. The first day I was on the plateau I saw some of the prisoners staggering to that building under heavy loads. I conjecture that the Old Man has confederates somewhere outside, in China probably, who supply him at intervals with the lead, and receive the gold in return."

"It sounds incredible!" exclaimed Forrester, interrupting his companion for the first time.

"The word 'incredible' ought to be banished from our vocabulary," Beresford rejoined, emphatically. "Nothing is incredible. They'd have said the same thing only thirty years ago about petrol engines, wireless telegraphy, and aeroplanes. I am convinced that the search for the philosopher's stone, which baffled the alchemists for hundreds of years, was not the absurdity we have been taught to regard it. In some distant age, someone discovered that Nature herself turned the base into the precious metal; the fact was rumoured abroad, though the scene of the transmutation was never allowed to become known, and the alchemists wasted their lives in trying to do artificially what had already been done by natural process. Why, aren't our chemists at the present day groping in the same direction? Don't they tell us that all terrestrial things are merely forms of the same ultimate element, or manifestations of the same ultimate force? Doesn't every fresh discovery point that way?"

"But how is it done?"

"I don't know. The Old Man doesn't know. Nobody knows. In that pit yonder, a hundred and fifty feet deep, as I calculate, there is a bed of some substance that possesses this marvellous property—call it radio-active if you like. It can't be radium, for the emanations of radium produce sores on the body, as you know, and these wretched Chinamen have no sores. Its effect, from what you tell me—and I confess your news astonished and appalled me—is far more terrible. Evidently exposure to its direct ray causes instant demolition—annihilation is not the word; dust remains. Proximity to it brings about a sapping of the will; you yourself felt that in your cell; I feel it, too. In the cavern yonder the effect is intensified. This mysterious power causes the mind to decay and the body to wither. How old do you suppose that Chinaman is?"

"He looks about seventy."

"He is twenty-eight! I don't know it from himself: he has no memory, cannot even tell you his name. But one of the others is his cousin—looks forty, and is actually twenty-two. He has been here a year, taking his turn with the rest at the work; they have a day each. And there's a mystery about the whole organisation which at present I can't fathom. All the prisoners here engaged in the horrible work are young Chinamen of good family. I was told that on the plateau. Why does the old villain employ none but his own countrymen? I shall find out by and bye; I haven't been here long enough to learn much; the poor wretches are so mentally abject that I have to go slowly with them. I do know this: that they are all brought in by priests of the second order. When one dies—their bodies are cast into the lake—he is immediately replaced by another. It seems that some of these priests are constantly prowling about the country, snatching up likely subjects here and there, some to recruit the labourers on the plateau, others for this diabolical work below. Your old Indian told me that every now and then a priest of the second order shaves his moustache and head, and enters the ranks of the first, after which he never goes into the world outside. It suggests that they are promoted after they have bagged a certain number of prisoners. How the priests are themselves recruited I don't know. They are all celibates. I suppose the Old Man has emissaries out proselytising. But these are all conjectures; I hope to find out a good deal more for certain before we get away."

"You know how to get away, then?" Forrester asked, eagerly.

"I haven't given it a thought," was the placid

answer. "I pin my faith to old Runnymede—Redfern, Ruddyweed, Runnymede. You twig the process?"

"But if he doesn't come?—if he is dead?" cried Forrester, too much concerned with actualities to be interested in the evolution of nicknames. "We can't get down to the rift, even if we escape from here like the Negrito."

"What Negrito?"

"Didn't you know? One escaped the other day, got on to the plateau, and took refuge with the old *zamindar*. He was caught, and I believe it was he that we saw destroyed by the Eye."

"Dear me! That is very remarkable. I hadn't the least idea escape was possible. We must discover how the little fellow managed it, though it's of minor importance beside other things we have to learn. For instance, knowing what we do of the tremendous destructive power of that mysterious substance below ground, how did old what's-his-name above contrive to imprison a portion of it in his mitre without atomising himself? Clearly, there must be *some* things that it doesn't affect—like that slab yonder."

"Why, I remember! Look at this!" Forrester exclaimed, taking from his pocket the crumpled sheet which he had found so useful in his cell. Unfolding it, he went on: "It was given me by the Indian girl, who received it from the Negrito. She said it saved from the Eye. When I held it between my eyes and the monster on the wall I could scarcely see the glare. It was a godsend."

"Marvels upon marvels!" cried Beresford, fingering the crackling sheet curiously. "We must look into this. But here comes dinner; we shall have plenty of time!"

CHAPTER XIII

A DRY BONE

THE dishes containing the mid-day meal were brought to the prisoners by the two Negrito sentries, who received them from the guard at the farther end of the ledge. The food, abundant in quantity, consisted of a variety of Chinese viands, strange to the Englishmen's taste, but not unpalatable.

"The Old Man feeds us well," Beresford remarked, handling his chop-sticks dexterously. "He doesn't want to hasten Nature's destructive work by starving us. Drinking-water, by the way, is got from a little stream that trickles into the lake just round the corner. I confess I shouldn't care to drink the water in which that antediluvian monster disports himself. We'll take a look at him presently—if we get a chance, for he appears to be rather shy. I suppose he feels hopelessly old-fashioned, or perhaps he has an aristocratic pride in his long descent, and scorns the company of such new creatures as mere men."

"Why isn't the place more stuffy than it is?" Forrester asked. "Where does the air come from?"

"That puzzled me at first, but I discovered the other day that there is a constant current of air, slight but quite perceptible, over the surface of the lake, through this cavern, and into a narrow cleft which I'll show you by and bye. There must be a passage into the upper air. The temperature is rather too high to suit me, but the air is pure enough, and many of the dungeons in mediæval castles were much worse places—barring the peculiarly oppressive effect of the stuff below. . . . You don't get on very well with your chop-sticks. Like everything else, they require practice."

"One thing I can't make out is why we are allowed such freedom. You seem to be at liberty to move about as you please, talk to the prisoners—you speak Chinese?"

"Yes; but only out of earshot of the priest in his sentry-box yonder. I don't want him to blab to the August and Venerable—not that it matters, perhaps. The explanation of our freedom is, of course, that it is only such freedom as birds have in a cage. The passage by which we came is barred by the guards. There are no tools or implements of any kind which could be used as weapons; in fact, there's nothing here but ourselves and a few bamboo rods yonder against the wall, which I fancy must be used for keeping the sentry box in repair. It's rather dull work for the priest, sitting there all day alone and mum; a new fellow comes every day."

After dinner Beresford led Forrester through the transmuting cavern into a narrow passage—a cul-de-sac, except that at its farther end there was a narrow cleft into which flowed a current of air. The opening was barely a foot wide, and the sides were of solid rock. There were slight marks which seemed to indicate that at some time or other an attempt had been made to enlarge the opening by chipping; but the marks were very old, and it was clear that the task, if attempted, had been abandoned as hopeless. The cleft had a slight upward slope; but, looking along it, Forrester saw no sign of daylight, nor did he hear any sound from the farther end, which was not visible. They both

agreed that no human being could possibly squeeze himself through so constricted a passage.

From this they returned to the entrance of the outer cavern, and on to the ledge outside. Peering across the gloomy lake, they failed to discover the monster whose image they had seen outlined on the wall.

"He is not at home to-day, evidently," said Beresford. "Well, we have exhausted the objects of interest. All that we can do for the rest of the day is to sit on our hunkers and 'tell sad stories of the death of kings,' or anything else you like. Later on, I'll tackle the prisoners again. I try to stir them up a bit, and get them to talk, without much success so far except with Wing Wu and his cousin. They are so horribly depressed, poor wretches! By Jove! I do wish I had my pipe!"

It was impossible to gauge the passage of time. The successive days, as Beresford explained, were marked only by the arrival and departure of the guardian priests, and by the cessation from work of the man in the smaller cavern, who returned to his companions when a certain number of the leaden plates had been changed into gold. These were placed in charge of the priest on duty, who superintended their removal when relieved next day.

That night Beresford found the younger Chinaman a little more communicative than they had been before. Wing Wu, indeed, evinced much pleasure in meeting Forrester again, and talked to him with a certain eagerness in English. He was the eldest son of a mandarin, he explained, and had spent a few terms at Oxford. Wen Shih, who had passed with distinction the innumerable examinations inflicted on Chinese literati, had been for a few months his father's secretary. In some subtle fashion he had obtained a commanding influence over the young man. Always courteous and agreeable, he enjoyed the complete confidence of his master, and gradually Wing Wu found himself consulting the secretary in every circumstance of his life, however trivial, until he lost all independence of judgment, and even of action. He was at Wen Shih's beck and call, did his behests even against his own will, and felt that Wen Shih dictated the words he uttered, and arranged his very thoughts.

"As I half expected," said Beresford, who had been listening intently. "These peripatetic priests are accomplished hypnotists. Under hypnotic influence a susceptible subject will declare black white, swear that his own blood is ink, and imagine himself his own grandfather, or any other absurdity. Go on, please."

Wing Wu explained that, one day, Wen Shih announced that he was going on a journey, and that the lad was to accompany him. The command was obeyed unquestioningly. All the details of the journey were a blank to Wing Wu until the adventure with the elephant, which seemed to have shocked him temporarily into his right mind. Here Forrester took up the tale, describing the peculiar dazed sensation which both he and Jackson had experienced once or twice on the march.

"He was trying his powers on you, of course," said Beresford. "Your friend Jackson was the most susceptible of the three, Mackenzie the least. You may be sure Wen Shih gave a full account of his experiments to his august master, and I can imagine the old villain taking a fiendish delight in sapping away at Mackenzie, the toughest of you. I only wonder he didn't send Mackenzie down here. We'll see if Chung Tong can tell us any more."

He addressed the cousin in Chinese, trying with infinite patience to allure his mind from the present circumstances to his past life. Chung Tong's story—such as it was, told haltingly—resembled Wing Wu's in almost every particular. He added a detail which Beresford seized on, keeping the man's wandering attention fixed on it as firmly as possible. It came out that for many years past there had occurred at intervals mysterious disappearances in his family. Young men in the twenties had left their homes suddenly, leaving no clue to their destination, and never returning.

"A light dawns!" cried Beresford, in unacademic excitement. "The Old Man must have a spite against this particular family, and wreaks it by stealing away these youths, doing them to death in this fatal laboratory of his. But why? Why? What have they done to incur vengeance so horrible?"

But no further information could be elicited from the prematurely aged Chinaman. His enfeebled brain was exhausted by its unaccustomed groping into the past. Beresford did not press him, but worried the problem, as a dog worries a bone, for hours before he slept.

Next morning, the priest whose spell of duty had concluded, after a brief conversation with his newly arrived colleague, signified that Beresford was to accompany him on his return to the upper quarters. Forrester shook when he understood.

"Must you go?" he implored, the scenes in the temple appearing luridly before his mind's eye.

"I shall go," Beresford replied, tranquilly.

"Buck up, my dear fellow. The August and Venerable won't demolish me yet. I expect it's a little cat-and-mouse performance. What if I bell the cat?"

"At any rate, do take the screen with you."

"Not at all. I don't want to lose that. We haven't discovered its secret yet. If I *shouldn't* come back—well, faith and hope, you know. I needn't say any more."

Forrester wrung his hand, and watched him pass along the half-ledge, across the crazy bridge, over the rest of the ledge, and into the passage beyond. At the entrance Beresford turned and waved his hand, smiling with the serenity of a man whose mind was at ease.

Two or three hours went by. Forrester paced up and down the cavern in uncontrollable agitation. The thought of losing this cheery companion was torture. He wondered with a carking anxiety what had happened to Mackenzie and Jackson—Hamid Gul, too, the faithful servant whose little odd turns of phrase assumed almost a pathetic winningness as they recurred to his mind. But always his thoughts came back to Beresford: his imagination focused that solitary figure confronting the cold implacable personification of Fate on his golden throne.

Many times he went to the entrance, not heeding, unheeded by, the mute effigy in the sentry-box, and gazed across the lake into the opening beyond. For what seemed an eternity, no vision of the lithe, sturdy form came to gladden his eyes. But on one of these occasions his anxious ear caught the dull tramp of many feet, and presently, at the head of a Negrito escort, appeared Beresford himself.

"Back again!" he shouted, his strong voice rolling over the lake.

Forrester met him at the entrance of the cave, and clasped his hand in a nervous grip.

"I've had quite a good time," said Beresford, linking arms. "The Old Man has been puzzling his wicked old head over my tablet, and he'll puzzle till doomsday for me! He orated solemnly, of course, about the Law of the Eye, and very cleverly hinted, without actually saying so, that the law demanded an exact translation of the Brahmi writing. I told him, quite politely, to go to Jericho. He, quite politely, regretted that I had made such poor use of my opportunities of learning wisdom. A mischievous impulse seized me to give him a shock, so I let out a few home truths—in Chinese! Believe me, he didn't turn a hair; I don't believe he has one to turn! He scored there, but on the whole I think we may consider it a drawn game. He recommended me to persevere in the pursuit of wisdom, wrapped himself in his mist-blanket, and no doubt crept back like a disappointed spider to his web."

Beresford found next day, however, that the Old Man's politeness had its reverse side. When the new priest arrived, he signified that the Englishman was to do a day's work in the inner cavern.

"It's not meant in kindness," Beresford remarked to Forrester, "but I couldn't have wished for anything better. I shall work quicker than the Chinamen, and, when my tale of bricks is complete, I shall have a good part of the day to myself. Lend me that screen of yours, will you?"

Forrester waited impatiently for the day to end. When Beresford returned, very white and tired, he said:—

"I've something to tell you. Give me forty winks after supper, and I'll be as fresh as a lark."

A little later, in their quiet corner, Beresford began:—

"That slab! I'm convinced that it's nothing but a sort of mica, made of the dust that has fallen from the roof, and that this screen is of the same material. I believe that the mysterious force from below, while it turns lead into gold, makes powder of all other substances exposed to its rays. That powder is no longer subject to its influence, and forms a shield against it. But for the dust it would have bored a hole right through the roof to the upper air ages ago; but the coating of dust on the sides and roof of the cavity has preserved it. Of course, the slight earth tremors that are constantly occurring, unnoticed by us, shake down particles of the dust, and leave portions of the rock surface exposed to the action of the rays. So there's a very gradual process of eating away going on, and in course of time the rock above the cavern will be pierced clean through."

"I see," said Forrester. "The force must have been in action for ages, so that it may be ages before the hole is made. Anyway, it doesn't matter to us."

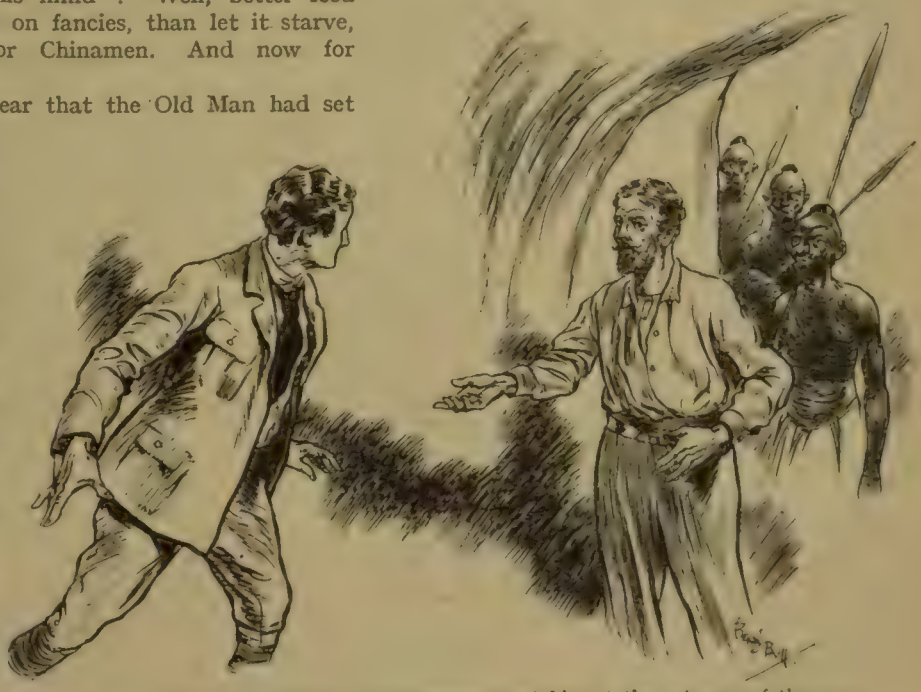
"I'm not so sure of that," returned Beresford, quickly, "If we could only hasten the process, and get a ladder, we might pay our venerable host a surprise visit one of these days, for I'm pretty sure, thinking over the direction of the passages we came through on the way here, that we're almost directly under the temple. That itself is underground, or it wouldn't glow with the green light; and you

may be sure it's connected with the Old Man's pagoda. It would give me great joy to intrude upon his solitude, and see him in his bath, so to speak."

"I'd rather give him a wide berth," said Forrester. "Anyhow, it doesn't seem possible."

"We have no ladder, and certainly we can't emulate the Earth-shaker, and engineer a series of mild earthquakes expressly for our own convenience. Ah, well! Like the heathen, I dare say we imagine a vain thing. What's that line of Virgil?—*Animum picturà* . . . You remember the passage: where Æneas is looking at the frescoes in Dido's palace, 'And with an empty picture feeds his mind'? Well, better feed the mind, even on fancies, than let it starve, like these poor Chinamen. And now for sleep."

It became clear that the Old Man had set himself pitilessly to undermine Beresford's courage. Instead of taking his turn with the Chinamen in rotation at the enervating work in the inner cavern, Beresford was given the task every second day. Robust as he was, and endowed with great strength of will, the electric atmosphere wrought its devitalising effect on him; and Forrester, after a week, noticed with sickening dread that his eyes were less bright, his cheeks less rounded, his voice less resonant. An offer to replace him was rejected by the priest; Forrester wondered why he himself was being spared.



At last Beresford appeared, and Forrester met him at the entrance of the cave.

The hours dragged very heavily while Beresford was absent at his work. Forrester had nothing to do. He roamed about the cavern, talked a little to Wing Wu, looked in at Beresford occasionally; but during the greater part of the day he had only his thoughts to occupy him. But it happened one day, as he passed the spot where the spare bamboo poles were laid, that an idea flashed into his mind. It seemed fantastic, probably impracticable, but it might at least be attempted: anything was better than this stagnant life in death.

The success or failure of the scheme that had occurred to him depended on the accuracy of Beresford's theory that the dust, formed by the action of the rays on the cavern roof, protected the rock from further destruction. If this was correct, and the dust could be removed, exposing fresh surfaces, the piercing of the chimney could be accelerated far beyond its normal rate. With a sufficiently long pole the dust coating could be brought down during the intervals when the rays were shut off by the slab. Such a pole might be constructed from the bamboo rods.

A difficulty arose from the fact that the cavern was never dark. It was always pervaded by the dim green light emanating from the walls. But the rods were partially screened by the sentry-box, and Forrester thought that in the dead of night, when the priest was asleep, and the Negritos were more or less drowsy, he might succeed in purloining the bamboo, and carrying it into the passage beyond the inner cavern.

Without mentioning the matter to Beresford, he waited till all was quiet, then stole round

the wall towards the rods, picked up as many as he could carry, and made his way undetected to the place determined on. Next night he removed a few more in the same way.

The following day was Beresford's turn of duty. In the early morning, after the new priest had arrived, Forrester told his companion what he had done.

"*Fiat experimentum!*" cried Beresford, delightedly. "I will tell you the result to-night. But not a word to Wing Wu! One of these days Wen Shih may occupy the sentry-box, and the poor lad will blab everything."

As soon as he had completed the transmutation of the allotted number of plates, Beresford fitted two of the bamboo rods together telescopically, tied his coat by its sleeves to the end of the pole thus formed, and, inserting this wad into the cavity, thoroughly scoured its roof. A considerable quantity of fine dust fell on to the slab and the floor around. He then raised the slab, allowing the rays to play on the roof for a longer time than when the leaden plates were sunk in the pit. This process he repeated again and again, heedless of his increasing weariness and a stupefying headache, until Forrester rushed in hurriedly to say that the priest, evidently surprised at his unusually prolonged absence, was coming towards the passage to seek its explanation. Beresford instantly untied his coat, donned it, while Forrester laid the pole in the recess, then, taking Forrester's arm, met the priest at the entrance, feigning a deeper exhaustion than he actually felt. The priests seldom entered the inner cavern; this man threw a casual glance around it, and followed the prisoners back to the outer cavern, suspecting nothing.

"It works!" Beresford whispered when he got to his customary place, and at once fell into a dead sleep.

Later on he told Forrester that the experiment had succeeded beyond his hope.

"As nearly as I could measure with the pole," he said, "the cavity is lengthened by at least a foot. The rays act with tremendous rapidity. In a few days, unless we are much deeper than I think, we shall have cut a hole right through to the level of the temple floor."

"But what then?" asked Forrester, dejectedly. "I thought it would give us something to do—you are doing it all!—and buck you up if it proved your theory; but it will do us no good!"

"It will at least scare the Old Man. If we are careful, he will never suspect that we have anything to do with it. He may even think the place no longer safe for his old carcase, and decamp."

"Leaving us to perish!"

"There's an old saw: 'Never go up to the chimney-pots to look for the rain!' We'll take things as they come. By the way, do you feel able to take a turn to-night, when all's quiet? The clink of the chain can't be heard here, and it will quicken the job."

"I'll try," said Forrester at once. "I've felt mean ever since they put you on and left me out."

"Thanks! One thing we must be very careful about—to brush away the fallen dust to the sides of the cavern. Will you do that before you leave? Don't work for more than an hour or two, as nearly as you can guess, and come away at once if you feel faint. Lay the pole against the wall of the farther passage; the Chinamen never go there, and, thank goodness, the priests are shy of the place—small blame to them!"

The work thus begun was continued at every opportunity during the succeeding days and nights. The pole had to be lengthened by the addition of another rod; foot by foot the chimney was excavated, the width of it remaining uniform, corresponding to the shape of the hole in the floor.

Every night, before they slept, the Englishmen talked over the progress made during the day.

"If we only had a ladder!" said Beresford once. "I agree with you: the mere cutting of the chimney will be an empty triumph. We shouldn't be properly constituted men if we didn't wish to profit by our energies. Every man who isn't a mug, as soon as he has conquered one difficulty, burns to tackle another. I've puzzled and puzzled, but I see no way whatever of using the chimney as a channel of escape."

"Couldn't we make a ladder of bamboo?"

"Quite impossible! To begin with, there isn't enough of it; then we have no tools. It is tantalising in the extreme."

"There's this to be said. Even if we did break through it would only be to find ourselves in the midst of our enemies. It would mean the Eye for both of us."

"I've been wondering lately whether that wouldn't after all be better than to stay here much longer. Forrester, the Old Man has beaten me at last. If he sends for me again, I'm afraid I shall ignominiously cave in. It was one thing to pity these poor Chinamen when we had no real personal knowledge of what they were

suffering. It is quite another to share it, to feel the steady sapping of one's vigour, the horrible blankness that comes over one's mind. I know for the first time in my life what it is to writhe in the clutches of Giant Despair."

In his many blank moments Forrester reflected in utter desolation of spirit on their desperate case. Ill and miserable as he himself felt, he dwelt not on his own condition, but on the appalling change that was creeping over the once buoyant-hea ted companion of his imprisonment. The cheeriness was gone. It was an effort now to Beresford to talk. The sickly hue induced by the greenish light had become on his countenance a ghastly pallor. His limbs shook, his gait was slow and stumbling, his once upright frame was beginning to stoop like that of an old man. On his days off duty he lay like a log, sleeping, or simply existing in apathy and listlessness. Was he to drift thus on a slow tide towards death?

One night Forrester was wearily laying the pole in its resting-place when he heard a sudden click near by, such as might be caused by the fall of some hard substance on the floor. He looked down, but there was nothing on the smooth rock to account for the sound. In a moment it was followed by a second click, apparently a little nearer, and from the direction of the cleft in the wall. His curiosity thoroughly aroused, Forrester stooped and glanced in. The light in the cleft was dim, but, after peering for a few seconds, he caught sight of a small object at a distance of perhaps ten or twelve feet away. He had not noticed it when looking into the cleft before, but that might merely have been because he was not expecting to see anything, nor indeed making a keen examination. But it seemed that the object must have moved, otherwise the click was scarcely explicable; and Forrester was sufficiently interested to wish to get hold of it. It was far beyond reach, the cleft was too narrow to admit his head and shoulders, but he could edge one of the shorter bamboo rods sideways into the hole, and then worry the object forward until he could grasp it. This was the work of less than a minute. To his intense mortification the thing, when it came to hand, turned out to be nothing but a bone.

He was on the point of throwing it back, when the idea struck him that the discovery might give a momentary fillip to Beresford's flagging spirits. So he slipped the bone into his pocket, and returned to the outer cavern.

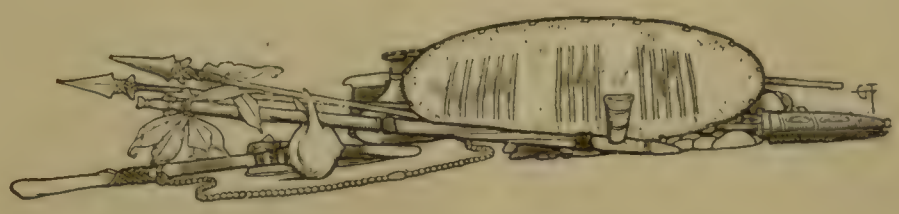
Next morning he accompanied Beresford, as he sometimes did, to the entrance of the transmuting chamber, and watched him commence his daily task. He had forgotten the incident of the night. But when the place was irradiated with the brilliant rays, he chanced to put his hand into his pocket, felt the bone, and drew it out, thinking now so little of it as to purpose casting it into the open pit. But as he turned it over in his hand he caught sight of some thin white scratches upon it, at first sight irregular and fortuitous, but at a second glance forming, as it seemed to him, the initials of his name: R. F.

Puzzled, and a little excited, he looked at it more carefully. It was not an old bone; a fragment of tendon, still supple, adhered to it. Examining it endwise, he saw that the interior was filled with a fine substance that might be desiccated marrow. He shook it; some of the powdery contents fell to the floor. He knocked it against his boot, and almost shouted with amazement, for at his feet lay a tiny spill of paper—apparently rice-paper—very tightly wound.

Hot now with excitement, he unrolled the paper with nervous fingers, and saw on it, in small characters written, as it seemed, with the fire-blackened end of a sharp stick, the words:—

"Give me my bone."

(To be continued)



MENZIE'S MASCOT

A Cricket Story

By JAMES DUNCAN ·:· Illustrated by Ernest Prater

I

RAPP read his letter through three times; then crushed it into his pocket, and went hot-foot till he found his cronies, Land and Waller. The former he saluted with a thump between the shoulder-blades that sent him staggering.

"Do you think," he said, when Land had picked himself up, "that 'The Mitre' can get peaches in July—what?"

They eyed Rapp's plump, but not unpleasant, form, and Waller inquired if he had suddenly gone mad.

"No—but seriously?" urged Rapp.

"What seriously?"

"Do you think 'The Mitre' can get peaches in July?"

"Of course they can't."

Rapp's face fell, but he brightened up next moment.

"In that case," he observed, reflectively, "I shall go for the cherry tart with cream, and I shall drink cider with chinking chunks of ice."

"Dotty, is he?" Waller asked.

"Absolutely," answered Land.

Having executed a few steps of an original and somewhat clumsy fandango, Rapp pressed a bar of chocolate into their willing hands, and condescended to explain himself.

"My Uncle Jim," he said, "not half a bad sort in some ways, is going to Egypt on July the seventeenth. He's written that he's coming down to say good-bye, and I've got to meet him at the station, and have a young lunch at 'The Mitre.' It'll make a decent start to the afternoon, he says."

"When's he coming?"

"On the Saturday before. It's the eleventh. The worst is, it's such a beastly long way off."

"You always were a greedy beast," said Land, who wished that one of his uncles would roll up and do likewise. "But," he went on, cheerfully, "lots of things might happen before then!"

"To stop my going, you mean?"

"Yes. You might smash your leg, you know; or catch the 'flue,' like Baker; or get the sack for cribbing my equations——"

Rapp leaped at him, and, when they had settled this little point, he remarked with emphasis, while he straightened his tie and collar:—

"You watch. In July I'll go jolly slow. I wouldn't be done out of that afternoon for anything."

But Waller had been consulting a fixture card, and now he looked really sympathetic.

"I thought as much," he said. "Rapp, old son, hard cheese! July the eleventh is the Greybury match."

"You're sure?" Rapp cried, his face falling.

"Quite sure. Look for yourself."

Rapp snatched the card; then groaned, and stamped upon it.

"Oh, lor!" he groaned. "Oh, lo-o-or! What beastly luck!"

Running your eyes over his stout and now lugubrious frame, you must have been startled to infer that he played in the school eleven. As a matter of fact, he was nowhere near the team; yet, all the same, a man of cricket mark. He was the school scorer.

It was not that Rapp liked scoring. He abhorred it.

But a chapter of accidents, that uncanny neatness in figuring which so often accompanies physical stoutness, and the stern hand of one Menzie, captain of games, had combined to force him into a post he more than filled. He scored with the precision of a machine—and loathed it.

Every day now, as he turned the subject over in his mind, it became more and more borne in on him that he had as much chance of that festive afternoon with his uncle as he had of looping the loop out Hendon way. Still, he wasn't going to say die, and just before the match with Wresham began, on the villagers'

pretty little ground, he decided that Menzie looked in a particularly good skin, and approaching him, observed engagingly:—

"I hope you'll make a hundred to-day, Menzie."

The captain started, and, as Rapp thought, eyed him quickly.

"Thanks, I hope I do," he drawled. "What is it?"

For Rapp, the scoring-book beneath his arm, was lingering still.

"Er—that is—I mean, Menzie," he stammered, "do you think—er—the Greybury match, you know——"

"Well, what about it?"

"I was wondering—would you mind—oh, could somebody else score against Greybury, Menzie? I want, awfully——"

But again the captain cut him short, this time indignantly.

"The chief match of the season!" he exclaimed. "I never heard such abominable impudence, Rapp."

Away he swung to toss with the Wresham skipper, and off trudged Rapp, disconsolate, to his box.

"Beast!" he muttered. "I hope he'll get a blob!"

A pious aspiration, but *cui bono?* For when the villagers had scraped a rustic hundred, Menzie took in Freeth to open the innings, and at once began to lay about him. All the bowling seemed to come alike. He clouted it with the grossest disrespect.

And in the box gloomed Rapp over his book—a key and a piece of indiarubber to keep the page from fluttering, two bars of chocolate to maintain his strength. But as soon as Menzie was patently there for good, Rapp seemed to be astonishing the village scorer beside him. "Zur? Be you zure?" this bucolic individual kept inquiring. "Certain," Rapp answered, crushingly. "I ought to know."

Freeth pottered about; Menzie smote on gaily. But, being of a generous disposition, the hotter and the thirstier he grew the more he felt inclined to get himself out. The match was as good as won already, and the fellows to follow him deserved a whack at this stuff.

"Still, I may as well go for my hundred," he reflected, as he hiked one into the scoring box. "Yes; I'll stick it out, and go for the century."

Now, when Menzie batted, he counted run by run, and at ninety-three he began to play more cautiously. The sequel proved a not uncommon one. He played back to a half-volley, and was bowled.

Out he trotted while the village clapped. And his first pang of disappointment was soon lost in a placid satisfaction that ninety was near enough; and when he had shed his pads, pulled his creased trousers a bit back into shape, laved his red-hot chest and face and arms, donned his blazer, seized the first cap that happened to be handy—it chanced to be an old Rugger one—he strolled out of the rustic little pavilion, and cast a casual glance towards the telegraph-board. His ninety-three would look quite well, he thought.

But the telegraph-board was on the other side of the ground, under the trees, beside the scorers' box. And either the blazing sunshine blurred the thing or Menzie's eyesight was beginning to play him tricks. He ejaculated, and sauntered a few steps farther. He stopped and stared.

Next moment he was striding across the ground.

"Rapp," he began, as the door clapped to behind him, "they've only got forty-seven on the board!"

Rapp glanced up from the tens he was ticking off.

"Jolly good innings, Menzie!" he replied, enthusiastically.

"Do you hear? They've only got me forty-seven!"

"Zur? Vorty-zeven I meks it," said the village scorer.

"Then how many is Freeth?" said Menzie to Rapp.

"Freeth? Let me see," Rapp counted: "He's ninety-five."

"Aye! Ninety-foive. You're right," the rustic purred.

Remembering, in the nick of time, what was due from him as captain, Menzie withdrew without another word. It was not until the evening that he sent for Rapp.

"Now, I want to know, Rapp," he began, rather ominously, with a glance at Freeth, who was grinning in the window-seat, "why you put my runs down to Freeth this afternoon?" It was never Menzie's habit to beat about a bush.

"Me!" expostulated Rapp, with nothing but the slightest change of colour. "Please—how do you mean, Menzie?"

This brought a slow smile to the captain's lips; he looked less formidable, but very business-like.

"Of course," he said, "you did make the mistake on purpose?"

Shifting from one leg to the other, Rapp

attempted to look injured, but failed signally. So he did the next best thing and answered nothing.

"You don't like scoring?" Menzie said at last.

Here was something his victim could admit.

"Rapp," said the captain, "they've only got forty-seven on the board!"

"I hate it!" he said, cordially.

"You'd like me to appoint another scorer?"

"I say! Thanks, frightfully!" said Rapp upon the spot.

"Well, easy on," smiled Menzie, when Freeth had finished laughing. "If you thought you'd make me chuck you, you're quite wrong. You've gone the wrong way to work, young friend. Shall I sack you and slay you—or keep you on?"

"I'd rather be slain," Rapp answered, with a sigh.

"Then you shan't be. You're far too good a scorer, my son, to lose. Also, as I tell you, you've gone the wrong way about it altogether. Why, if I'd made my hundred this afternoon"—Menzie waxed indignant—"I'm hanged if you wouldn't have chiselled me out of it. Now wouldn't you?"

"I suppose I should," said Rapp, with perfect candour

"Very well, then. Now listen where I come in. You'll score now for the rest of the season—every match."

Rapp's face was the picture of despair. He had made so sure that, after smiting him for his mistake, Menzie would declare him unfit and depose him—and here were all his plans come to naught! Worse than naught, he reflected, as he retired despondently; worse, a hundred times worse, for what chance had he now of begging off on the eleventh of July? Hang Menzie! Hang cricket! Hang that grinning idiot Freeth! Hang everything!

Yet, if he had known it, Freeth was putting in a word for him.

"Menzie, it isn't like you," he was saying, "to keep a chap as scorer against his will."

"Isn't it?" smiled Menzie, looking away.

"No, not a bit. I've never known you taken

that way before. Besides, what's the matter with Baker? He's fit again."

Baker was the scorer whose touch of influenza had opened the chapter of accidents for Rapp.

"And I suppose," said Menzie, uneasily, "Baker wants to get back again?"

"He does. He asked me, as a matter of fact, to sound you. He's awfully sick about it—awfully sick."

"Still—you heard my ultimatum just now to Rapp."

"Have him in and whack him, and take it back."

"Can't be done. I'm sorry," murmured Menzie.

Freeth felt a little sore. His friend's attitude seemed unreasonable, when he had practically begged him to chuck Rapp.

"Oh, all right," he answered, rather huffily; "but as a favour to myself, old man——"

"Look here!" ejaculated Menzie, avoiding his eyes. "If I tell you something, will you keep it to yourself, Freeth?"

Freeth nodded, on his dignity.

"Well, it isn't that I want to be hard on the youngster. I'd let him off like a shot if—if—I hadn't another reason. He's a mascot, Freeth. Upon my word, he is!"

"A how much?"

"A mascot. He always brings me luck. You remember how badly I began the season?"

"Yes; rottenly."

"I couldn't get a run the first four matches. Then Baker caught his 'flu,' and I found Rapp. The first match he was scorer I made seventy-five."

"H'm!"

"Next game I tried Prescott. I took a blob. Next match, Rapp. And I made eighty-nine!"

"I don't see——"

"Half a mo'. I kept on Rapp as scorer—result fifty-nine, eighteen, sixty-three, and to-day's score, bringing the sequence up to date. Now, Freeth old man, I'm not really superstitious——"

"No—not a little bit!" grinned Freeth.

"I'm not," cried Menzie, earnestly. "But it's jolly queer, Freeth; it's thundering queer, at any rate. I've come off every single time Rapp's scored. I'm sticking to him."

"Well, of all the superstitious old dogs!" cried Freeth.

"But I only told you," Menzie urged, "because you looked so sick, old man. Remember that you've promised to keep it dark."

"Oh, that's all right," Freeth answered, easily. "So-long."

And his chuckle was audible a long way down the corridor.

II

"But, Menzie, I want to score again. And I think I ought to."

"So you've told me about a dozen times, Baker; but Rapp's the better scorer; that's all about it."

It was the Sunday after the Wresham match, and Baker had been urging his case in Menzie's study. The captain felt a little guilty as he said this, and more when Baker retorted, not inaptly, that *he* at any rate had never jammed the runs down wrong. The remark was justified, but it provoked his summary ejection.

So he sought out Rapp, and found that doleful individual with Land and Waller. With remarkable virility for one just recovering from the "'flu," Baker prefaced his observations by a blow upon Rapp's cheek, but his supplanter replied with skill and pungency. When Baker picked himself up for the last time, it was to hear Land pleasantly remarking that Rapp was not only the better scorer but the better boxer—any day!

Unhappily, the matter did not end there. For, soured by such unmerited vicissitude, and refusing to believe that Rapp served under compulsion, the supplanted raised a species of vendetta which split the junior school into two camps. This soon came, naturally, to Menzie's ears, and he spent a gloomy space considering it. At last he sent for Baker and for Rapp, and they found Freeth grinning in the window-seat.

Encouraged by the presence of his backer, the deposed renewed with eloquence his plea for reinstatement. But his delight was a poor thing compared with Rapp's, when Menzie, having remarked that if there was any more barging he'd slay both, put Baker back into the post of honour. He spouted forth effusive gratitude, while Rapp went dancing out to Land and Waller.

Having sketched a little supplementary menu, he prayed that the strawberries would last. There were less than three weeks now to the eleventh.

When the school played Huyton Manor the week afterwards, it was Baker who swaggered with the score-book under his arm. At ease upon his rug with Land and Waller, Rapp felt like a prisoner released, and dwelt upon the

decency of Menzie in liberating him after his Wresham trick.

"For after all," he said, "it was a low-down trick. I might have swizzled him out of a century."

"Yes, you might," agreed his friends. "You had some nerve."

"I was savage," Rapp admitted, with a blush. "Well, we'll back up old Menzie to-day. By George, we will!"

They proceeded to illustrate their feelings by clapping vigorously as Menzie went to the wicket. Beside him ambled Freeth, and the school settled itself down comfortably to watch this pair repeat their Wresham performance. For Huyton Manor were the weakest side they played.

Very fit and formidable looked Menzie, and each ball of the first over he got plumb upon his bat. Freeth, too, seemed in incisive mood to-day, for he hit his third ball very hard indeed, and considerably wide of cover-point's left arm. He called to Menzie and the latter ran, while cover, bouncing like another ball himself, contorted every limb and threw in frantically. The action was too swift to be dissected, but everyone could hear the scream that followed, and see the stumps apart, and the umpire's hand up. Menzie had paid the penalty of ignorance—that cover was a left-hander!

"My beastly luck!" he said, under his breath, and as he passed the scoring-box, they say, he glared ferociously at Baker in the very act of announcing "duck—one—duck." Baker had always prided himself on the pontifical tones in which he addressed the board-boy, but now he curled up, and mumbled it. "Menzie glared," he grumbled afterwards, "as if the beastly thing was all my fault!"

This was the only piece of good fortune the Manor enjoyed. They failed to get another batsman out, and the school declared at 211 for one. It was Freeth's first century, and also Harrison's, and a big enough total for a half-day match. But Menzie was entirely off his bowling, and the visitors managed to make a draw of it.

"Funny!" Freeth remarked to his friend that night. "Funny, after what you were saying, Menzie."

"Oh, awfully funny!" Menzie answered, drily.

Rapp, at that same moment, was completing a letter to his uncle in which he furnished an account of the day's match, and, by way of afterthought and postscript, added casually that he would meet the London train on the eleventh. "Thanks frightfully," he added again, "for asking me."

It is a curious but indisputable fact that never in his life had Rapp's uncle been favoured with so many letters from Rapp as he got just then.

Next Wednesday his nephew was able to report how the school had fared against Boxover College. "We just managed to squeeze home," he wrote; "but all the fellows say we'll have to play much better to lick Greybury that's on the eleventh you know when I'm meeting you they won the toss and got a hundred and eighty Menzie bowled awfully well he's fearfully decent." It occured to Rapp that a stop was wanted here, so he supplied it, took a bite of chocolate, and continued. "We'd have won more easily if Menzie had come off he was always making runs at one time but the last two matches he's done rottenly. I said in my last letter how a chap who shammed he was a right-hander ran him out against Huyton because he was a left-hander all the time and this afternoon he hit an awful corker that looked as if it would go out of the ground." Another full stop? Yes; Rapp thought so, after another bite of chocolate. "There was a beast of a fellow on the boundary who'd been slapping his arms and kidding he was cold and when the ball ought to have gone out he jumped at it and it stuck between his finger and his thumb it jolly nearly smashed his finger Waller says but Menzie's he's awfully decent had to go he'd made three he looked beastly sick. There are two more matches before Greybury we're awfully keen on licking them this year they thrashed us last but it was a rotten fluke do you think I ought to tell the Miter to keep a room or I mean some lunch in case it's all been eaten after lunch Land says you'll like to see the cricket and we three would take you back to the Miter for tea I mean Land Waller and me I do hope we win."

Rapp had finished and was wetting the envelope, when he suddenly exclaimed and sat quite still. He opened the letter, for a tremendous thought had struck him. "I say," he added—there was just room for it—"I wish you could ask Menzie to tea but he'd think it awful cheek besides he'd be playing he's been awfully decent letting me off scoring."

"The Frogs" proved too strong for the school in the next match; but Baker peevishly protested afterwards that Menzie needn't have snapped his head off when he took the scoring-book back. "Just because he was clean bowled by a yorker he groused at me for making the

book dirty"—thus Baker to a circle of his friends. "I hope he'll get another blob next week!"

Freeth, lounging in the window-seat, was just then eyeing the captain curiously.

"You know," he said, "your luck's dead out, old man."

"I suppose you mean that's the worst of being superstitious?"

"Well," Freeth answered, "I don't know that I do. But you vowed you weren't superstitious; you know you did."

"No more I am," snapped Menzie, very quickly. "I'm not superstitious, Freeth. Of course I'm not. I never said I was superstitious," he went on, and seemed to worry the word between his teeth. "I only told you that I always made runs when that fat youngster Rapp was doing the scoring. That's a totally different thing from being superstitious!"

"Oh, is it?" Freeth responded, with a grin.

"Of course it is," cried Menzie, irritably. "Of course it is, you cuckoo, and you know it! And anyhow, just look at this book for yourself"—he tossed the scoring-book across to his friend—"and see there if I'm not exactly right. I'm not superstitious. I'm merely stating facts."

Freeth made some display of consulting the scores, but at last he slid down and approached the other.

"Look here," he said, "if I were you, old man—I mean if I felt the same way as you do about it, I'd jolly well make fat Rapp scorer again."

"You would?" cried Menzie, with a shining eye.

"I would! You bet I would."

But the captain shook his head and shrugged his shoulders.

"It's too late now," he said. "I can't do that. Baker likes scoring; Rapp doesn't. It's a bit rough on the kid, it really is, to make him do the thing against his will. Besides," he concluded, after a heavy pause, "it isn't as if I really believed that rot. Of course I don't, you juggins!" Menzie laughed.

"No, of course you don't!" said Freeth, significantly. "No, old man, you're not superstitious. In fact," he ended, as he reached the door, "I never knew anybody less so."

And again his chuckle was audible down the corridor.

"But I wonder," mused Freeth, when he was conning his Latin prose, "if he'll break his luck against the M.C.C. next Saturday!"

You may be sure that the captain's loss of form had not gone without comment in the school, which was musing very much as Freeth was musing, but without the food that Freeth had for reflection. But against the M.C.C., they were confident, Menzie must come into his own again; it was incredible to suppose, you know, that he could be dismissed under double figures four times running! Preposterous enough, no doubt; but not so in the view of the three professionals whom the visitors brought down to do their bowling. The youngest and most supple of the trio, who had just dropped awhile from the Middlesex side, regarded Menzie, when he arrived to bat, not as a victim of misfortune meriting sympathy, but as an obstacle between himself and his leisure. So he did not hesitate one instant, when his obstacle nibbled tentatively at a rising one, to inquire in a matter-of-fact tone what views his umpire held upon that ball? "Hout!" remarked the umpire with emphasis, and Menzie mutely wended his way back.

"But, between you and me," he told Freeth beneath the trees, "I was never within a mile of touching it. Of course, I should have felt it if I had."

"Well, we were a bit astonished when they appealed for a catch at the wicket. It didn't look to any of us as if you touched it."

"I did not," said Menzie, gravely. "Why, the wicket-keeper himself declared I didn't. But a fellow can't dispute it and kick up a fuss."

"No, of course he can't," said Freeth. "Of course he can't."

Rapp's summary of this disaster in his avuncular letter that night was perhaps a little tinged with partisanship. "You never saw such a chowse," he wrote, "as the way they swizelled out old Menzie. Land swears that the M.C.C. bowler funked him I mean Menzie of course I don't mean Land and knew he couldn't get him out fairly so he squared the umpire who'd got a bottle nose. But Menzie almost slew Land when he heard him jawing like that and anyhow it was a rotten swindle. I shall be in jolly good time at the station next Saturday the Miter is strong on cherry tart."

It was agreed that Menzie's loss of form (or luck) augured poorly for the school's chances against Greybury, who had to be beaten somehow or other to redeem the entire season from disappointment. Very anxiously was the weather followed this week, and the prospects of a hard or a soft wicket debated, and when the rain began to pour on Friday the gloomiest prognostications prevailed. The dormitories went sadly to bed that night.

In the Long, however, there was one exception who found it hard to bottle his excitement. His best clothes, his best handkerchief, his best tie—they were all ready in the basket beneath his bed, and every rock which threatened to wreck the emprise had been avoided with most sedulous care. Indeed, when application had been made after prep. for leave-off to spend the afternoon, Mr. Geary, to whom it was addressed, had observed in the very driest of his manners:—

"Ah! I had been wondering, Rapp, what had come over you. And this explains it. Oh, yes, you can go."

So, while everybody was thinking of rain and wickets, Rapp lay awake and mused on—cherry tart. To do him justice, he dwelt on other things also: on cider with chunks of ice in it, for instance, and salad, and his uncle. These pleasant reflections drifted him to sleep, and when he woke the birds had begun to twitter and one pale wisp of gold was flecking his sheets. "By Jove! it's fine!" he said beneath his breath, for all the beds around him were asleep still, and then he peeped from his own little strip of window and saw the dawn-sky, pearly blue already. He wished the getting-up bell would be quick!

At breakfast they were all talking about Greybury, due to arrive at eleven o'clock. Rapp, attired in his very conspicuous best, might otherwise have attracted more attention; but he escaped catechism upon his movements in the general excitement over the match. When Freeth got hold of him a few minutes after—just as he was looking up the London train again—one regrets to say that he prevaricated, remembering Freeth's *penchant* for commissions. A fellow rarely went down to the town but Freeth would give him something or other to do there.

"You're very smart to-day," observed Freeth, lightly.

"Am I?" said Rapp, with innocence. "I hope you'll make a lot, Freeth."

"I'm going to," said Freeth. "Look here! I want to talk to you."

III

One hour of first lesson, and the day's work over; and Menzie had barely got back into his study before the door was lightly tapped upon. In response to his answer appeared a stout young personage arrayed no longer in purple and fine linen, but in workmanlike and everyday grey flannels, with a coat the sleeve whereof was shiny from much contact with the table in the scoring-box.

"Hallo! What can I do for you, Rapp?" Menzie smiled.

Rapp hesitated; and certainly he had need to. There mustn't be any giving away of Freeth, nor any treading on the captain's corns. Unless a fellow went awfully warily, cats jolly quickly jumped out of bags, you know. In this train, Rapp had primed himself outside.

"I believe—er—Baker's seedy to-day," he stuttered. "I thought—perhaps—er—you'd let me score!"

Menzie looked up sharply from the bat on which he was affixing a new rubber handle. He rolled this between his palms, and eyed Rapp.

"Baker seedy?" he exclaimed at last. "He was all right when I saw him after breakfast."

But Rapp had his own reasons for assuming that Baker might not feel himself by now. These reasons were concerned with Land and Waller, and could not on any account be exposed. He repeated dismally but stolidly:—

"If he's not up to scoring, please, can I?"

"I thought you hated scoring!" was Menzie's answer.

"I do—I mean I used to, Menzie," said Rapp.

"But you want to score to-day—against Greybury?"

His eyes upon the carpet, Rapp said, "Please."

"Well, settle it with Baker. As you like."

"That means I can," said Rapp. "Thanks frightfully, Menzie."

But no sooner was the captain by himself again than his mien and attitude entirely changed. He whistled as he worked away at his handle, he indulged in a few steps of a dance, and when Freeth came in a moment afterwards he smote that trusty partner on the back, exclaiming:—

"My son! I'm booked for runs to-day!"

"What's up?" growled Freeth, looking bewildered.

"That fatted youngster, Rapp, is going to score!"

"No! Is he?" Freeth exclaimed. "Have you got round him?"

"He came and volunteered to. On my word."

"No—did he?" Freeth repeated. "Did he really?"

The surprise which he professed and Menzie felt was shared by many of the junior school when presently they glimpsed the round face and form of Rapp ensconced behind the flap in the scorers' box, at his elbow a piece of

indiarubber and a key, and three bars of chocolate to maintain his strength. It was observed by one or two that Land, who was hovering like a bee around the score-box, had changed since breakfast into his Sabbath garb, and as twelve o'clock was striking and the school eleven were going out to field, Rapp leaned across the flap and beckoned to him.

"You quite understand," he whispered, "how to explain it to Uncle Jim?"

Land nodded. He was excited to be off.

"You'll tell him, of course, that Freeth didn't press me a bit. In fact, he never knew I'd got leave-off. But the way he put it, I couldn't do anything else." Rapp's voice sank, and his manner became just a trifle swaggering. "A man can't—er—let his school down, don't you know," he ended. "Uncle Jim will see that. I know he will."

"Trust me. I'll put you straight with him."

"And, I say!" Rapp cried, as Land darted away. "I say, old man, don't spare the cherry tart."

Then he sighed, and sharpened his pencil savagely.

Yesterday's downpour had left the ground upon the soft side, and Greybury had joyed to win the toss. They'd get the best of the wicket, while it was dead but easy, and have the school batting when it "talked." They hoped with fervour that the sun would go on shining.

And it did. It mounted to mid-heaven and flared there. It sucked the moisture from the reluctant turf as the thirsty man will drain a pannikin. It made each umpire's coat a dazzling sheen. It parched the bowlers' throats. It streamed into the scoring-box till Rapp's brow shone. And it pursued with vehement fiery shafts the eager Land upon the station road.

Intent, then, on making the most of their advantage, the visitors set themselves at once to force the pace. At half-past twelve they had forty on the board; a few minutes afterwards, when fifty went up, Rapp heaved the heaviest of his heavy sighs.

"You're thinking," said the visiting scorer, brightly, "that we're beginning too well for your chaps—eh?"

To the surprise of the school, Menzie came along and took the scorer's arm.

No answer from the melancholy Rapp.

"Two to Cartwright," the other chanted, professionally. "I said—you think we're starting too well?"

"Just coming in," groaned Rapp. "Just steaming in."

The Greybury scorer looked up in bewilder-

ment, and very nearly forgot to score a bye. Till all at once he saw the explanation. This fat fellow must be a bit deaf. Well, it was a swot to talk to a chap who couldn't hear, so he ceased his efforts to make conversation.

Rapp scored on mechanically, like a man in a dream.

But at last the other began to feel hungry, and found that it was ten minutes past one. So he nudged Rapp, and exclaimed very loudly and distinctly:—

"What—time—do—we—lunch?"

"Lunch?" sighed Rapp, mopping his glistening blow. "Cider! With great chunks of tinkly ice! They'll just be sitting down to it."

"Not quite all there," was his companion's reflection. But aloud he answered, still at the top of his voice, "How can they be? They're playing still!"

This brought Rapp to his whereabouts with a flush.

"All right," he growled. "I hear you. We're lunching at half-past, if you want to know."

"Did you say there'd be iced cider?"

"No. Tepid ginger-beer," growled Rapp. "Oh! Bowled, sir!"

For Menzie had knocked a middle stump down.

Disaster pursued Greybury in these last few fateful minutes before lunch, and presently, when the umpires snatched the bails, the faces of the school were brightening. After all, the mob agreed, they hadn't done so badly; but the nuts upon the fringe of the team sauntered up to the pitch and eyed it, and disliked its look, and shrugged mysterious shoulders.

"This afternoon," they said, "it'll be a glue-pot."

Not quite as bad as that, but very nearly. And in forty minutes afterwards the last Greybury wicket fell. "One—two—nought—ten—duck!" rang Rapp's vindictive announcement. Then he rose and struggled out of the box.

His eye was on the gate which admits into the playing fields; every instant he was watching for a small form and a large one. But now he had to buck off to the pavilion and copy down the batting order from the slip there.

"Ah, Menzie's put himself in first to-day again," he mused. "I say! He must believe in it!"

Padded and gloved, Freeth hove upon the scene; he was looking serious, but he grinned when he saw Rapp. To the latter's amazement, he linked his arm in his. "Mascot," he whispered, "now mind you jolly well masc!"

"They've had all the best of the wicket, haven't they?" said Rapp.

"You bet! That first hour, when it was easy, cooked our goose. I mean," Freeth went on hastily, correcting himself, "it would have done if old Menzie wasn't in form."

Rapp forgot to watch the gate; he was staring now at Freeth excitedly.

"I say!" he murmured. "Wouldn't it be funny. You know—if Menzie——"

"Shh! Here he comes," said Freeth.

And here was Menzie, swinging his bat blithely, and the school felt certain that wonders would never cease when its captain took the other arm of Rapp. But none of them could overhear what Menzie said.

"Rapp, I've just been told," he said, "that you were going to meet an uncle of yours in town to-day."

"I might have done," drawled Rapp, with large indifference.

"Then why, Fat Rapp, were you so keen to score?" Menzie was glancing from him to Freeth suspiciously.

"They're in the field," cried Rapp. "They're waiting for you."

And he bolted, like a rabbit, to his scoring-box.

He was shaking with a strange excitement now, and his fellow scorer didn't know what to make of him.

"First," said he to himself, "he shams he's deaf, and next he's like a monkey on hot bricks. That ginger-beer must have got into his head."

"Oh, hit!" he heard Rapp crying frantically.

"To Freeth or Menzie, was it?" he inquired.

"To Menzie. You'll see—he's going to clout them."

And it happened, curiously, that Menzie did. When in his second over he put up an easy chance to point, and when point juggled with the ball until he dropped it, one or two remarked that Menzie glanced fixedly at Freeth and then towards Rapp; but it was perhaps the scorer's delight which attracted his notice.

"Now, if Baker had been scoring——" said Rapp to himself.

"Now, if Baker had been scoring——" Freeth was thinking.

And the school was remarking that this was the first bit of luck that had come the skipper's way since the Wresham match.

Freeth went at thirty-two, bowled neck and crop; but Harrison stayed on till forty-seven, and Stokes, who followed, saw sixty on the

board. And all the time the wicket screeching at them, and Menzie gallantly taking every risk, running out to smother it on the pitch or drawing back to watch it up to his bat. At seventy-seven he bade good-bye to Neil; but the latter's sojourn had not been without fruit, for thrice with that celebrated blind swipe of his he had ducked the square-leg umpire to the ground. And at each of these swipes, although they were not Menzie's, Rapp had screamed with the most unpardonable shamelessness: "Oh! Stroke, sir! Oh, good shot!"

"A rotten stroke!" the Greybury scorer growled.

"They all count. Every one," chirped Rapp.

By now he had forgotten the gate entirely, and, when a shadow fell on the box's flap, he looked up bristling with indignation.

"You're not made of glass, you know——" he was beginning, then: "Ninety UP!" he bellowed. "Hallo, uncle!"

"You're winning, eh?" his uncle greeted him.

Discussing the victory afterwards, and the captain's wonderful eighty-one that made it, the school agreed what frightful luck for them it was that point had dropped that sitter Menzie gave him!

Nor can the proposition be disputed.

Yet when somebody presently observed as much to Menzie, he smiled a cryptic smile, and merely said:—

"I *knew* the chap would drop it—all the time."

"How could you?" Harrison laughed. "Of course, you couldn't!"

"But I did," insisted Menzie. "All the time."

"But how?"

"Ask Rapp," smiled Menzie. "Ask that fat kid, Rapp."

And to this very moment he denies that the Greybury match was really won by him.

THE END

COMPETITIONS FOR JULY

Interesting Contests in which all Captainites may take part

No. 1.—FORECAST OF THE COUNTY CRICKET CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE

Many readers, doubtless, have already made up their minds which county will head the championship table this year. Do you think you can predict, in correct order, the six counties which will be at the top of the final list? This is the task you have to attempt this month in order to win the prizes offered below. In addition, you must also give your estimate of the *percentage* of points gained by the county you place *first*; but this will only be taken into account should two or more competitors place the first six counties correctly.

FIRST PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: Goods to the value of One Guinea (to be selected by the winner from the catalogue of any firm advertising in THE CAPTAIN).

SECOND PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Book by a CAPTAIN Author.

No. 2.—TITLEGRAMS

Take the title of any story in this month's CAPTAIN and compose a phrase or sentence consisting only of words beginning with the same initials as the title of the story which you select. The initials of all the words in the title must be used, but they can appear in any order. Thus, if the title "Raising the Wind" be chosen, the phrase will comprise three words beginning with the letters R, T, and W respectively. Here is an example that might possibly be sent by a critical reader who deems the story selected somewhat "tall":—

Black **P**anther
Past **B**elief

The phrase, of course, should bear some reference to the title selected.

FIRST PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: An Enco Cycle Lamp from the Electric Novelties Co.

SECOND PRIZE IN EACH CLASS: A Book by a CAPTAIN Author.

RULES AND CONDITIONS

1. The name, address, and age of the competitor must be written above his attempt.

2. Each attempt must be accompanied by the proper coupon to be found on the prizes page (see page vi).

3. Competitors will be divided into two classes as follows:—

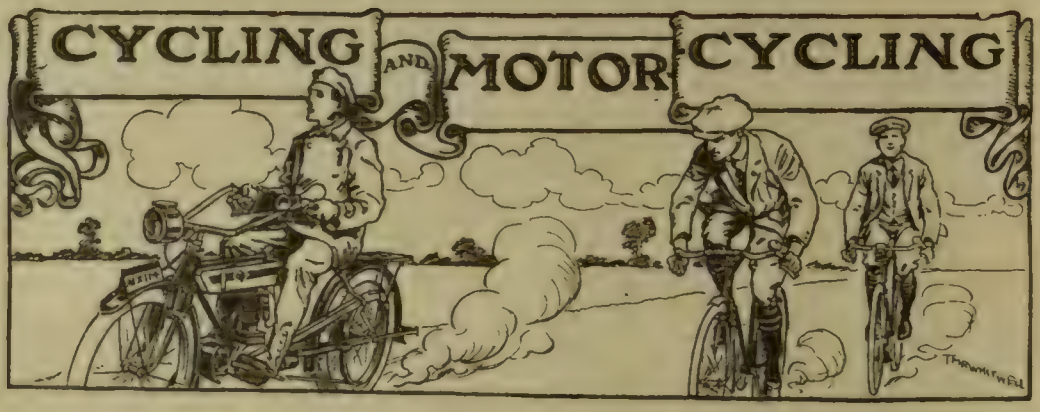
Class I.—Competitors sixteen years of age and over.

Class II.—Competitors under sixteen.

4. Entries must be received not later than Monday, July 20th, 1914, addressed to the Competition Editor, THE CAPTAIN, 8, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C., the name of the competition—"Cricket" or "Titlegram"—being written in the top left-hand corner of the envelope.

5. The Editor's decision must be accepted as final.

CONSOLATION PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED IN EACH COMPETITION



By ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

Editor of "Engineering Wonders of the World." Author of "How it Works," etc.

ROLLING AN INNER TUBE

IF the business is tackled in the wrong way, the rolling up of an inner tube into small compass for packing in the wallet or sending by post is not at all an easy matter. The diagrams in Fig. 1 show how it should be done. First, extract the valve to give air free egress. Then lay the tube on the table, doubled, with the valve at one end; and roll it up, beginning at the other. The turns must be tight, to prevent air working its way back. When the valve stem is reached, insert the valve and screw it down tight. The tube, which is now beautifully flat, is arranged as depicted in Fig. 1*b*. Fold each end over towards the valve, and repeat this once or twice, until the effect shown in Fig. 1*d* is obtained The whole is then held tight by a broad rubber band (cut from an old tube) slipped over the middle. It is advisable to encase the valve in a piece of paper or the finger of an old glove before the final rolling, as this will prevent the metal chafing the rubber. The tube should be carried in a stout canvas or leather bag, in the company of some French chalk.

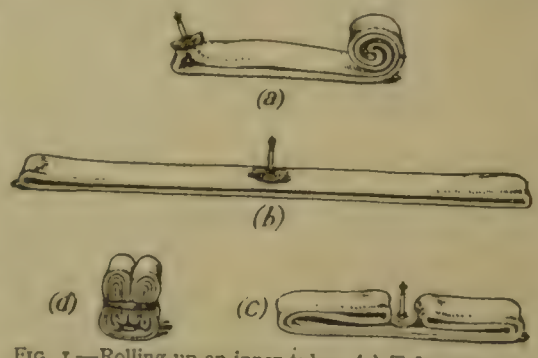


FIG. 1.—Rolling up an inner tube. (*a*) Tube rolled up to expel all air; valve removed. (*b*) Valve replaced and tube laid out flat. (*c*) Tube doubled over towards valve from both ends. (*d*) Tube fully rolled up and secured by a rubber band.

THE DOUGLAS MOTOR-CYCLE

Anyone who is well versed in motor-cycle matters will, directly the word "Douglas" is mentioned, think of the twin-cylinder horizontal engine, with pistons moving in opposite directions. The Douglas people were, I believe, the first to adopt this type of engine for motor-cycle work, and their enterprise has proved remarkably successful. The system confers two great advantages: (1) as the pistons move inwards or outwards simultaneously, taking their cranks and rods with them, an excellent balance is obtained; (2) the engine gives equally spaced explosions, one every revolution of the crank-shaft: an effect which cannot be obtained with the V-engine; or with a twin-cylinder vertical engine, unless both pistons move in the same direction at once—which makes good balancing very difficult. To my ear the regular sequence of explosions is much more pleasant than the dot-and-go-one sound of the V-engine; and from a mechanical point of view the mutually opposed cylinder principle is ideal. This principle demands, of course, that each cylinder shall operate its own crank, set at an angle of 180° to the other. There is little to be said in favour of the engine suggested by Fig. 2, making use of a crank common to both pistons, as the pistons must in this case move in the same direction and set up a horizontal vibration. Moreover, the sequence must give two explosions during one revolution and none during the next. Work it out:—

Cylinder A	Cylinder B
Suction	Compression
Compression	*Ignition*
Ignition	Exhaust
Exhaust	Suction

etc., etc.

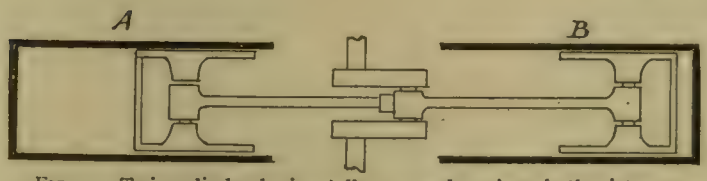


FIG. 2.—Twin-cylinder horizontally opposed engine; both pistons moving in the same direction.

Now turn to the Douglas arrangement (Fig. 3) :—

Cylinder A	Cylinder B
Suction	*Ignition*
Compression	Exhaust
Ignition	Suction
Exhaust	Compression

etc., etc.

The good design of the engine enables the machine to be run very slowly on the one hand, even if single-geared; and, on the other, to travel very fast when opened out—much faster than any reasonable rider could wish for on the high road.

The new 3½ horse-power Douglas which has been introduced this year is the result of the demand for something more powerful than the standard 2¾ horse-power for side-car work. The size of engine has been increased by only ⅛in. in bore and stroke to obtain the extra power. To make removal of engine and two-speed gear-box an easy matter, they are clamped, not to the frame itself, but to a platform permanently attached to the frame. The system of lubrication adopted is worthy of notice, as it is a good example of the no-trouble method. A large oil reservoir, holding rather more than half a gallon of oil, forms the lower part of the crank-case. A screw elevator, driven off the crank-shaft, raises oil continuously from the reservoir, and delivers it to a trough into which the big ends of the piston rods dip every revolution. The oil dispersed by them over the inside of the cylinder and piston finds its way into channels which lubricate the gudgeons and main bearings, and the surplus returns to the reservoir through a filter of two very fine gauzes. As the elevator is driven direct by the engine, the amount of oil supplied varies proportionately to the speed. The only thing left for the rider to do is to drain the reservoir every six hundred miles or so and refill it with fresh oil; a job which even the most sluggish cyclist would not shy at.

The outside fly-wheel is 11ins. in diameter—rather larger than the average dinner-plate. Though an outside fly-wheel is not intended for such a purpose, it acts as a very powerful brake if the sole of one's boot is pressed against the rim. I owe an escape from a very serious accident to the existence of such a fly-wheel on one of my earlier machines. While descending a very steep hill I found that the main brake on the back wheel would not act (owing to a pin having come out at a joint, as I subsequently discovered). The cable operating the front brake, being subjected to full pressure, gave way, and I was soon rushing down a 1 in 7 decline at a terrific pace. Then it occurred to me to try the effect of the flywheel, and, to my great relief, I got my machine under control once more.

BRADBURY MOTOR-CYCLES

Mention of the horizontally opposed twin-cylinder engine reminds me that Bradbury & Co. have recently introduced a model with a motor of this type. An interesting point about the cylinders is that they have detachable heads, the joints between them and the cylinders proper being made gas-tight by means of copper washers. This separation enables the machinist to machine the cylinder all over between the fins and leave an equal thickness of metal all round. In an unmachined cylinder, however carefully cast, there must be variations in thickness, which tend to produce uneven expansion of the metal and a consequent lack of perfect circularity. It need hardly be said that any such distortion must reduce the efficiency of the engine, since a circular piston-ring cannot make a gas-tight fit with a non-circular cylinder.

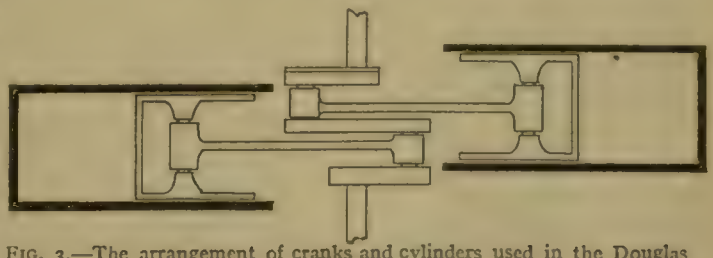


FIG. 3.—The arrangement of cranks and cylinders used in the Douglas motor-cycle engine.

The horizontal engine-cycle has a three-speed gear of the sliding dog type on the countershaft, to and from which the drive is transmitted by chains. The clutch is faced with cork, which takes up the drive very sweetly.

ROVER CYCLES

Though the Rover Company is now well known for its motor-cars and motor-cycles, it owes its fame to the good old push-bike, as under the management of the late J. K. Starley it was the first firm to undertake the manufacture of modern "safety" cycles. Its first productions in this line would, of course, seem very curious, if not comical, to the present-day cyclist. But I can vouch for it that they were made of good stuff right through, like the Rover machines now being sold in large numbers. You may be quite sure that any bike with "Rover" on it is one worth having, and will run many thousands of miles without showing signs of wear, if properly cared for—and probably will even if allowed to take its chance.

There's one point about the Rover which I like particularly, and that is the ease with which the back rim brake can be detached and replaced. Having spent many hours of my time wrestling with brake horseshoes, guides, etc., I appreciate fully the boon of being able to free the wheel from the brake in much less time than it takes to write about it, by merely pressing the horseshoe with the fingers.

SAND YACHTS

At the Aero Exhibition in March I saw a Blériot sand yacht. It looked a very fascinating little craft, and I should much have liked to try its paces on a certain three-mile stretch of hard, smooth sand with which I am acquainted. The main features of design are sketched as accurately as my unaided memory permits in Fig. 4. The chassis provides accommodation for two persons tandem in bucket seats between the members of the main frame. The sail is a standing lug.

The chassis is built up of steel tubes with brazed joints, and truss stiffenings underneath, so that great strength is obtained with materials which expose but small surface to the air. Wheels of motor-cycle pattern, shod with tyres of 2in. or 2½ins. diameter, are used, and those on the rear cross member are mounted on stub axles like the front wheels of a motor-car, and moved by a wheel tiller to direct the yacht.

Given a surface of hard sand, a long, clear run, and a good wind on the quarter, a "yacht" will attain tremendous speed, rivalling that of the ice boat. Anybody who knows how to handle water craft will soon pick up the trick of manœuvring its land relative, so I am assured by a gentleman who has tried his hand at the newer form of navigation. An occasional spill and even an involuntary charge into the water are to be reckoned with, but, as the apparatus is light and the falling is "easy," results no worse than those of an upset from a toboggan or bob-sleigh need be anticipated. My own experiences are still in the future; but, I hope, the not very distant future. When I get some spare time I shall set about designing a machine which will be light, strong, easily taken to pieces for transport, and inexpensive. If and when I bring off the construction successfully I will let you know. Meanwhile, I should be glad to hear from any reader who has carried through the construction of a sand yacht himself.

FIG. 4.—The Blériot sand yacht, which will carry two persons at a tremendous speed in a good wind and on a hard sand.

RAISING THE WIND

By HAROLD AVERY

I

EVERY schoolboy, when engaged in the arduous pursuit of knowledge, appreciates those rare intervals of repose during which a master wanders from what might be termed the main track of the lesson into some by-path of reflection, and such a moment had arrived in the Lower Fourth at Flexham College.

"The professional letter-writer is still a familiar figure in the East," Mr. Hudson was saying, in a meditative manner. "In return for a fee he will compose and write a letter for anyone who requires his assistance. Possibly," continued the speaker, in a tone of magisterial jocosity, "some of you, who rack your brains over the question how to 'fill up' a weekly letter home, might find the services of—— Merick, I spoke to you not five minutes ago—stand out!"

The boy thus addressed, who had been endeavouring to extract musical sounds from a sort of miniature Jew's harp consisting of the fangs of a broken pen-nib, obeyed the command, and the interruption caused Mr. Hudson to return abruptly to the work in hand. By the time his class passed on for dismissal at 12.30 his chance reference to the professional letter-writer had already passed from the recollection of all his boys save one, in whose mind, oddly enough, it lingered and promised eventually to bear fruit of a somewhat extraordinary kind.

Merick was a youth rather given to evolving strange ideas; though the winter term was barely three weeks old, his purse contained nothing but a watch-key, and in this poverty-stricken condition he was faced with that evergreen problem how to raise the wind.

In the free time between tea and the commencement of evening prep., Merick buttonholed a class-mate named Shale, and drew him aside into a quiet corner of one of the passages.

"I want you to lend me that tinned blancmange thing of yours."

For a moment Shale looked mystified, then a light seemed to dawn on his understanding.

"Oh, I know what you mean," he said. "That affair for making copies of anything. What d'you want it for?".

"For making copies."

"Yes, but what of?"

Merick hesitated, then seemed to think that, since it must be made public some time, concealment of his intention was useless. What was more, something of the pride of the inventor urged him to reveal his project and see what Shale would think of it.

"I've hit on what seems to me rather a good idea for making some tin," he began. "You heard what Hudson was saying this morning about a professional letter-writer, and how heaps of fellows find it a beastly bore to think of what to say every week when they're writing home. Well, I thought it wouldn't be a bad plan to offer to write letters for them; say, charge them a penny apiece."

"Penny apiece," echoed Shale. "Good gracious; you'd be ages earning even a bob, besides the fag of it. It would take you no end of time to write a dozen different letters."

"Yes, but they wouldn't be different; they'd be all the same. That's why I want you to lend me your copying affair; every fellow who chose to subscribe for it at the rate of a penny a time would get a copy of my weekly letter."

Shale laughed; then his rather foxy-looking face assumed a look of increasing interest.

"I see," he murmured. "You mean——"

"Listen," interrupted Merick, impatiently, at the same time producing a sheet of scribbling paper from his pocket. "This would be the first, and it'll give you an idea what the others would be like. Same thing would do for everybody."

The speaker moved a pace or two nearer to a neighbouring gas jet, and commenced to read.

Letter for week ending Oct. 14th.

I don't think I have anything particular to tell you about this week; let me think if there is any news. Our first team played Detchford on Wednesday, the result being a draw; which everyone considers a swindle, as their last goal was offside. There is some talk of the junior ground being enlarged after Christmas, which would be a jolly good thing, especially for cricket, when it is overcrowded, and just when you are making a catch a fellow belonging to another game and who is doing the same thing runs into you backwards, so that you both miss the ball, and the bowlers get ratty. On Tuesday the water was cut off for a short time at the main, and a fellow who didn't understand what had happened turned on all the taps of the lavatory basins, and went off, leaving them like it; in consequence of which, when fellows went down into the basement after afternoon school they found a young flood, and there was

"I want you to lend me that tinned blancmange thing of yours."

rather a lark—people pretending to be drowned. I don't think anything else of importance has happened this week, except rather a strange affair in the Upper Third, when Mr. Newton's blackboard duster was found rammed away in a corner, and simply soaked with raspberry jam; which at present is a mystery. You will, no doubt, be anxious to hear what sort of weather we are having. Monday and Tuesday it was simply rotten, and Wednesday evening it poured again in buckets. I hope you are all well, and that (*here inquire about any of your people*). When you write next time tell me: if (*any question will do*).

With love to all (*or what you usually end up with*).

"Hum—rather a novel idea, anyway," commented Shale. "But look here, if I let you have the use of my copying machine, remember I go shares in the takings."

"I don't see that. Why should you? It's my idea."

"Plenty of room for two," replied Shale. "Besides, you aren't sharp enough, my boy. You'd sell a copy to one fellow and he'd let all his pals have the use of it for nothing, whereas I'd make everybody fork out beforehand. You write the letters, we'll share the work of making the copies, and I'll sell 'em."

On further consideration Merick was inclined to agree to this proposal. He knew himself to be no great hand at driving a bargain, whereas his companion was known to be an adept at that sort of thing. Eventually a partnership was agreed upon.

"We can but try it," said Shale. "Don't see why it shouldn't answer—saves time and bother—supplies a long-felt need, and so on—what's more, a penny a week won't ruin anybody."

The view of his scheme thus expressed caused Merick considerable satisfaction. During preparation he wasted a good bit of time endeavouring to calculate what income was likely to accrue if all members of the school from the Lower Fourth downwards could be induced to subscribe regularly for the weekly letter. Fellows in the forms above were scarcely likely to prove approachable, and there were day-boys who did not count.

"Say forty chaps come in," pondered Merick "Forty pence—three and fourpence, one and eight extra pocket-money for each of us. Not so bad; wonder no one ever thought of it before."

Unfortunately the truth of the old saw with regard to the folly of counting chickens before they are hatched was destined to be shown in the case of the weekly letter project. At the very commencement the new firm's operations were overtaken by an unexpected disaster. Shale's copying "machine" consisted of a flat tin-box containing a glutinous composition on which blank sheets of paper were laid to receive impressions, after the application of a similar sized document written with a special ink. On examination Shale discovered that what his partner termed the "blancmange" had somehow wrinkled up into curious furrows, and decided that, before use, it would have to be melted and set aside to cool, when an even surface would be thus obtained.

At Flexham the juniors did not possess studies, a privilege enjoyed only by members

of the Sixth, boys lower in the school being accustomed to make common-room use of their respective class-rooms. At the close of morning school, on the day following his agreement with Merick, Shale repaired to the Lower Fourth class-room, produced from his locker the flat tin box, and placed it carefully on the top of the stove. Gradually the composition began to show signs of melting. A notoriously greedy youth named Porson, who had been seated at a back desk writing an imposition, laid down his pen and strolled forward to watch what was happening.

"I've got some biscuits," remarked Porson, in a tentative manner.

"Suppose you think it's something to eat," snapped Shale. "Well, that's just what it isn't. It's a thing for copying letters."

"Oh!" murmured Porson, and with a slightly dejected look returned to his lines.

Ten minutes passed, the composition was now in a liquid state, and Shale was just considering the advisability of setting it aside in some safe place to cool when the door burst open, and two fellows named Bate and Hughes dashed into the room, the one in pursuit of the other. For a few moments the chase continued in and out between the rows of desks, then Bate snatched up a book as if hopeful of being able to bring down his quarry with a pot-shot. The missile flew wide of its intended mark, whizzed across the room, and hit a corner of the tin-box, causing it to leap into the air, at the same time emptying its contents over the hot stove. There followed a furious hissing sound, accompanied by wrathful yells from Shale, then what Hughes afterwards described as "the most poisonous sniff you could imagine."

"Oh, murder!" gasped Porson, and promptly fled out through the open doorway, an example immediately followed by Bate and Hughes. Coughing and choking, Shale made a wild dash for the nearest window, and succeeded in flinging it open, but the draught thus created served only to waft the fumes of the bubbling mess on the stove farther afield. Bate and Hughes found themselves literally pursued along the passage by the abominable odour, which a moment later assailed the nostrils of no less a personage than Mr. Hudson.

"Pah! what on earth is the meaning of this?" gasped the master. "Where does this horrible smell come from?"

"Please, sir," answered Bate, who, for reasons which need not be gone into, had no love for Shale, "I think that it's coming from your class-room."

The blackboard duster was found rammed in a corner, and soaked with raspberry jam.

There is no need to follow the master's indignant footsteps. Shale was severely reprimanded and awarded an imposition, though the punishment pained him less than the destruction of his copying apparatus. As neither he nor Merick had any capital, they could not provide themselves with a fresh "plant," and the catastrophe marked the collapse of the weekly letter project.

Though the scheme itself failed, it brought about the commencement of an increasing intimacy between Shale and Merick. The former, in the course of various conversations, was continually harking back to the subject of "raising the wind." Shale, it appeared, had had considerable experience in this interesting process. In his time, he had sold everything imaginable; from books to old lead piping; he had extracted tips from the most unlikely people; reared and found a market for caterpillars and fancy mice; run an agency for rubber stamps; and raffled a pair of roller-skates. Just at present, however, he was at a loose end, and on the look-out for some fresh enterprise.

"That wasn't a bad notion of yours about the weekly letters," he said to Merick. "Try to think of something else. Now what could we do, I wonder?"

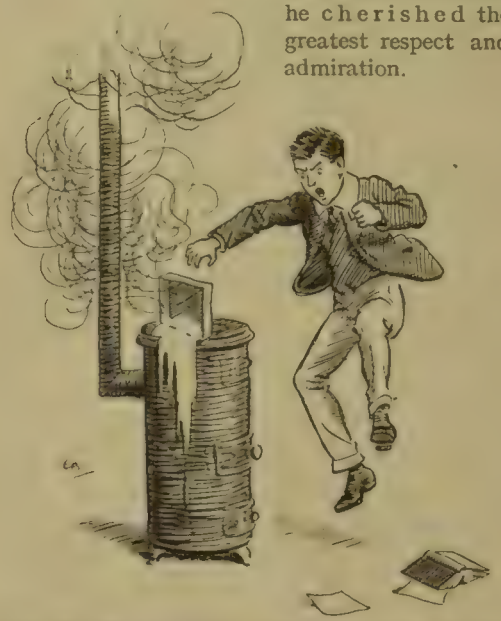
There was a tacit understanding that if either of the pair was struck with some new idea he should communicate it to the other; and, if it seemed promising, they would embark on the venture together.

For some days the friendship continued to

ripen, then, one afternoon when on his way to the playing-field, Merick was accosted by his cousin Cradock, a stalwart senior in the Sixth, wearing the coveted cap of the Fifteen.

"Hullo!" said the great man, rather gruffly.

"Hullo!" returned Merick, glad at all times to receive any token of recognition from a personage for whom he cherished the greatest respect and admiration.



There followed a furious hissing sound, and wrathful yells from Shale.

"Look here," began Cradock. "Can't you find anyone better to go about with than that worm Shale?"

"I haven't had much to do with him until just lately."

"Well, 'just lately' is a jolly sight too much. Why don't you drop him, and take up with someone more decent? I thought young Mason was supposed to be your chum."

"Oh, he's not such a bad sort—Shale, I mean."

"Bad sort. Faugh!" ejaculated Cradock. "I wouldn't trust that kid the length of my nose. I tell you, Shale is a dirty young sharper, as artful as a fox. He'll do you in the eye for certain if you have any dealings with him, or what's just as likely to happen is this: that chap will get himself into a bother some day over one of his dodges, and if you happen to be in the same boat—nice thing for you!"

Merick was silent; it seemed to him that this tirade was rather uncalled for. He knew Shale was not popular, but hitherto he had never seen anything which might have led him to suppose that the chap was an absolute wrong 'un.

"D'you hear what I say?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then," concluded Cradock, preparing to quicken his pace in order to overtake a friend; "don't let me see you going about with that young rotter again."

II

For once in a way Merick was not inclined to act on a piece of advice given him by the great Cradock. To the youngster it seemed rather mean to cut a fellow for no better reason than that someone else was prejudiced against him and ran him down. During the course of a week, however, Shale himself seemed to grow weary of a fruitless friendship; there was no quarrel, the intimacy merely slackened off; then, all at once, something happened which drew the pair together again.

It was a half-holiday, and towards the close of the afternoon Merick was sauntering back from the junior football ground when, as he turned an angle of the school buildings, someone hailed him from across the quadrangle.

"Just the man I've been looking for," began Shale rather breathlessly. "I want to tell you something."

"Wait till I've been in and changed."

"Never mind about that—shan't keep you more than a minute. Look here, can you lend me three bob?"

For a moment Merick hesitated, whereupon Shale went on again.

"We've often talked about ways of raising some tin; well, I've thought of one. Worst of it is I haven't got a cent, but if you can advance me three bob I'll promise you I'll double it—pay you back six."

"When?"

"Before long—week or ten days, perhaps."

"What are you going to do?"

"Oh, it's just a little idea of my own," answered Shale, with a grin. "All you've got to do is come in as sleeping partner for a day or two. Lend me three bob, and I'll make it six."

Something in the speaker's manner caused a shadow of doubt to rise in Merick's mind.

"Why won't you tell me what you're up to?" he began. "If it's betting or anything of that sort, Shale, you might get us both into a row."

"Betting—rot! I never bet—more likely to lose your money than make any. No one could possibly get into a row over this. It's

simply a perfectly square deal, only I don't want it talked about—no need to put any other fellows up to the same thing. I'll tell you some day. All you need trouble your head about at present is that if you'll let me have three bob I'll double it."

Merick, it so happened, had received that morning from home a postal order for five shillings, a fact which his observant comrade had not failed to notice. If what Shale said was true, and he was acting entirely on the square, there seemed no harm in taking advantage of this unexpected offer. After all, at the commencement of those lean days when money brought back with one had all been spent, three shillings was three shillings.

"Very well, I'll let you have it after I've changed."

"Good man. By the way, don't say anything about it—just leave the whole thing to me."

The days passed, a week went by, and Merick began to grow slightly uneasy about the repayment of his loan. Shale never mentioned the matter, or returned vague and evasive replies to questions. Once Merick caught sight of him ensconced in a quiet corner of the class-room writing a letter, and he seemed to betray unusual interest in the arrival of the post. At length, when the interval of waiting had lengthened out into close on a fortnight, and Merick was beginning to remember Cradock's prophecy that Shale would one day "do him in the eye," the money was repaid together with the promised interest.

"I say, Merick—want you a minute," said Shale, poking his head round the door of the Lower Fourth class-room, in which a crowd of boys were congregated waiting for the bell to ring for dinner; he was wearing his cap and overcoat, having seemingly returned from a journey into town.

"There you are, partner," he remarked, when Merick joined him in the privacy of the passage. "Three bob you lent me, and another three makes six; not a bad rate of interest, eh?"

"How on earth did you make it?"

"My good chap, take what the gods send you, and don't be so inquisitive. It was all fair and square, like buying and selling eggs."

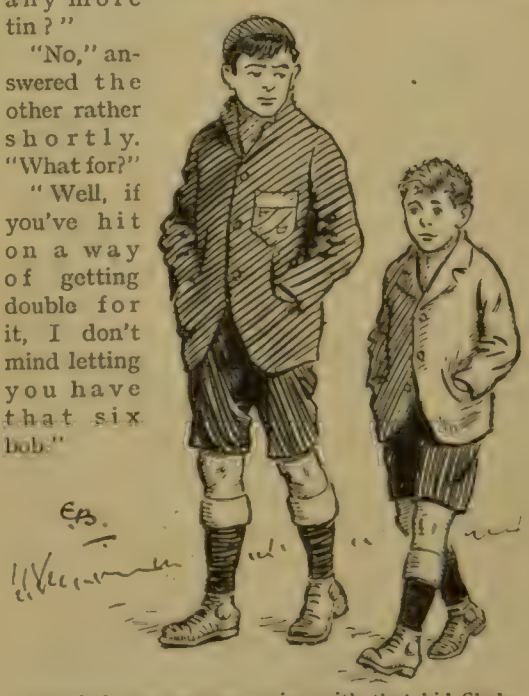
Shale snapped his fingers and laughed aloud. As a rule he was not demonstrative, but just now he seemed bubbling over with excitement. During dinner he behaved like a lunatic, and ended up the day by getting his name taken for a stiff imposition for throwing balls of paper about during evening prep.

A shrewder person than the sleeping partner might have wondered what profit Shale himself had made on his mysterious speculation, and whether this unwonted display of high spirits might not be attributed to the success of the transaction. Merick was not grasping, but what he did think was that lending a sum and receiving it back double was "not so dusty" after all—rather a good way of augmenting a slender supply of pocket-money. In the course of the evening the notion rather took hold of him. If he could do the same thing with the six shillings, that would make it twelve, and a repetition of the process would bring in one pound four. During the quarter of an hour's "break" in the next day's morning school he sought out Shale, and proceeded to sound him on the matter.

"I suppose you don't want me to lend you any more tin?"

"No," answered the other rather shortly. "What for?"

"Well, if you've hit on a way of getting double for it, I don't mind letting you have that six bob."



"Don't let me see you going with that kid Shale again."

"Ah, my boy," returned Shale, wagging his head sagaciously. "The chance of doing that doesn't happen every day, and you've got to keep your eyes open to see it. Look here, don't get blabbing about it, then perhaps I'll put you up to another good thing if I drop across it."

The speaker turned on his heel, and walked away.

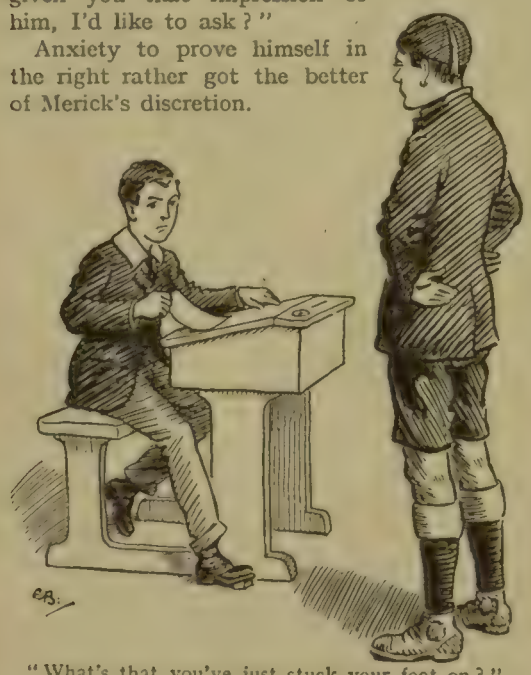
Passing out of Big School when the general assembly which marked the termination of the morning's work was dismissed, Merick felt a firm hand laid on his shoulder.

"I want a word with you," began Cradock, drawing the youngster apart from the stream of boys issuing from the arched doorway. "I thought I told you to drop Shale, yet only about an hour ago I saw you nose to nose with him again."

"Why have you got your knife into him? He's honest enough."

"Oh, you think that, do you? What's given you that impression of him, I'd like to ask?"

Anxiety to prove himself in the right rather got the better of Merick's discretion.



"What's that you've just stuck your foot on?"

"Promise you won't let him know I told you," he began. "But I lent him three bob the other day, and he's paid me back six."

"What!" growled Cradock, thoughtfully. "Cent. per cent., that's pretty stiff. Did you fix the rate of interest? No? Then what's Shale been about that he voluntarily pays you back double what you lent him?"

"I don't know; he wouldn't tell me. A deal of some kind, I suppose, but he vowed it was perfectly fair and square."

For a moment or two Cradock made no reply.

"Look here, my friend," he began, "I don't consider it my business to ferret out the dirty dodges of a fellow like Shale, but there's one thing I'm determined on, and that is, you're to pay the beggar back that three bob you say you've made out of him. If you don't come to me between now and dinner and say you've made him take it back, I'll have nothing more to do with you. There, that's straight, and I mean what I say."

At the moment it would have been impossible to predict what effect this speech would be likely to have on the youthful Merick; he said nothing, and turned away with a slightly injured look. But inwardly he was a good bit upset. He knew his cousin to be a man of his word, and valued his good opinion at a great deal more than three shillings. What was more, the great Cradock was no sentimentalist; he was not given to going about offering other people good advice, and, on the rare occasions when he took it upon himself to do so, it was only natural to suppose there must be something in what he said. This thought revived in Merick's mind his own doubts as to the nature of the venture in which his investment had been doubled. Had it been a square deal or otherwise?

Shale was discovered returning from a visit to his play-box to fortify himself with a snack of cheese and biscuits before settling down to work at his imposition.

"Hullo, partner," was his greeting.

For the first time, and in rather an odd way, the word "partner" seemed to Merick to sound a trifle unpleasant.

"I say, Shale," he began. "Why won't you tell me how you made that money?"

"At it again!" was the reply. "Because I don't choose to just now. You've got your share of the profits, and you ought to be jolly well satisfied."

"Well, I'm not satisfied. Since you won't tell me, you can take back your three bob; and remember, I'm out of it."

"Just as you please," answered Shale, pocketing the coins. "More for me, that's all."

III

It seemed as if Shale's new method of raising the wind was likely to remain a secret known only to himself; then, quite suddenly, to quote the words of Mason Minor, "the bottom fell out of the whole box of tricks."

Cradock was rather late changing for football, and, as he hurried along, the interior of the school buildings had that deserted look which betokens a strong muster on the playing-fields. While he remembered it, he wanted to give Merick a message received in a letter from home. Thinking that the youngster might not yet have started for the junior ground, he

turned down a passage and, a moment later, opened the door of the Lower Fourth class-room. The place had only a single occupant. At one of the back desks sat Shale, with a sheet of paper before him, a portion of the imposition which he had not yet finished. But his pen lay idle in the groove beside the inkwell; he was handling something below the level of the desk, which, as he started and raised his head, fell to the floor with a *plop!*

"Merick anywhere about?"

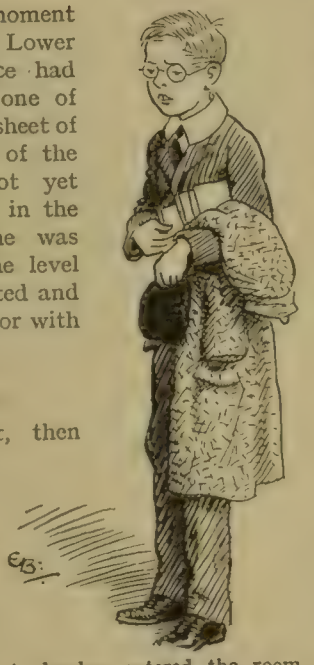
"He's gone to footer."

Cradock paused a moment, then advanced slowly down the room.

"What's that you've just struck your foot on?" he inquired.

"Nothing," answered the other, rather breathlessly.

"Nothing, eh? You mean something you don't wish me to see. Well, as it happens, I'm going to have a look."



A day-boy entered the room, carrying his coat in readiness to go home.

Shale protested, but he might as well have attempted to argue with an inflowing tide. Cradock pushed him aside and picked up an ordinary match-box. It felt rather heavy, and was found to contain something screwed up in paper—money—to be precise, five pounds in gold and ten shillings in silver.

"Is this yours?"

"Of course it is."

"Hum—you seem pretty flush. How did you come by it?"

"Got it from home," answered Shale, glibly, but his face showed clearly that he was lying.

With great deliberation Cradock counted the cash, and replaced it in the match-box.

"Look here, my good fellow," he began in a slow, even tone. "What I want to know is how you came by all this money. If you don't choose to tell me, and to tell me the truth, I shall take this box to the Head, and you can go to him to claim it."

"It's quite all right, and I don't see why ——"

Cradock swung round, and moved towards the door.

"I say, stop a minute!" cried Shale in a tone of desperation. "There's no need for you to take it to Marchmont."

* * * * *

Afternoon school was ended; Radfield, head of the school, sat in state at his study table; on one side of him stood Cradock, and on the other Shale. There was a knock at the door, and a day-boy named Burt entered the room; he was rather a dull-looking youngster, and was carrying his books and overcoat in readiness for going home.

"You sent for me," he murmured, rather anxiously, as if wondering what could have been the nature of his offence.

"Yes, I want to speak to you. In the first place, I understand this is yours, or was yours before you sold it to Shale?"

The object in question was a rather worn-looking scrap-book; most of the pages were blank, though a few were ornamented with Christmas cards, badly mounted and smeared with gum.

"Yes," answered Burt, rather sheepishly. "It was mine when I was a kid."

"And not long ago you sold it to Shale for three shillings?"

"Yes."

"I want you to tell me exactly what happened when you made that bargain. Be careful, I've got my reasons for asking."

"I don't know that anything happened," began Burt with a look of mingled surprise and bewilderment on his face. "I met Shale down in town one afternoon, and asked him to come into my place that I might return an oil-stone he'd lent me. This scrap-book happened to be lying about in a little den I've got, and he said if I wasn't using it he'd give me three shillings for it, as he wanted a book to stick photos in. That's all I can tell you about it."

"At the beginning of the book four pages have been torn out—that's before you come to these Christmas cards. D'you happen to remember what was on them?"

"Only some coloured pictures. An aunt of mine stuck them in ages ago. She gave me the book."

"Exactly," returned the school captain. "Well, now I'm going to tell you something. Those coloured pictures were what are called Baxter prints. They weren't worth much when they were first published, but now people collect them, and some of them especially are valuable. Shale has an uncle who collects, and knew at once what they were, though it appears he took care not to enlighten you on the matter. He bought the lot for three bob,

and afterwards sold them to a dealer for five pound ten. I've made him show me the man's letter, in order to make sure that was what he got, and that no one else has had a share of the plunder."

"I don't see that I've done wrong," protested Shale, doggedly. "Heaps of people go into cottages and spot old china and things, for which they give a few pence when it's worth pounds."

"Sort of thing I can imagine you yourself doing," snapped Radfield. "But it's not the sort of game we're going to have carried on at Flexham. What I propose is that Burt takes the book and the five pounds ten, and pays Shale back his three bob. If either of you isn't satisfied we'll refer the matter to the Head, and let him decide."

"I'm quite satisfied," gasped Burt, before whose mind floated visions of a new bicycle.

Shale said nothing, but it was evident that he had no desire for the head master to be called upon to arbitrate.

"Very well, then," said Radfield. "Take the cash, Burt, and this book—what's left of it, and hand him over three shillings. As for you, Shale, I've already told you what I think of you, and don't you forget it."

Shortly after tea, while, in the Lower Fourth class-room, Shale was undergoing the ordeal of an informal and somewhat outspoken inquiry into his doings, Merick made his way to his cousin's study, the occupant of which was discovered writing a letter.

"I thought," began the junior in a faltering tone, "that I ought to come and tell you I'm jolly glad you made me return that three bob. If I hadn't then I should have been——"

For a moment he paused, at a loss how to express himself. What he meant to acknowledge was that partnership in Shale's latest enterprise would have meant disgrace not easily lived down.

"I should have been——"

"In the soup," suggested Cradock without raising his eyes from his note-paper, and driving along with his pen. "Glad you took my tip. Can't talk to you any more now. I'm busy."

SCOTTISH SCHOOLS' SPORTS RESULTS

School.	Long Jump.	High Jump.	100yds.	Quarter-mile.	Half-Mile.	Mile.	Hurdles.
Edinburgh Academy	W. B. Constable 17ft. 10ins.	R. K. Gordon 4ft. 8ins.	R. D. Stevenson 11⅕secs.	J. S. Oliphant 56⅕secs.	J. S. Oliphant 2mins. 19secs.	J. S. Oliphant 5mins. 15⅕secs.	R. D. Stevenson 22secs.
Fettes College	C. D. Reid 18ft. 5ins.	J. H. Cowper 5ft. 4ins.	A. S. Le Maitre 10⅕secs.	J. L. Puller 56secs.	J. L. Puller 2mins. 12⅕secs.	J. L. Puller 4mins. 59secs.	J. M. Calder 20secs.
Glasgow Academy	G. J. Ogg 19ft. 1½ins.*	A. R. Murray 5ft. 1in.	G. J. Ogg 11secs.	A. I. S. Fraser 55⅕secs.*	—	C. A. Campbell 5mins. 6secs.*	G. J. Ogg
Loretto	M. N. Gray 19ft. 5½ins.	M. N. Gray 5ft. 5½ins.	M. N. Gray 10⅕secs.	H. Peters 55secs.	—	G. S. Muir 5mins. 14⅕secs.	R. Stirling 17secs.
Merchiston Castle	D. Robertson 17ft. 10½ins.	W. A. Ure 4ft. 11½ins.	A. E. Considine 11secs.	A. E. Considine 56secs.	—	D. H. Hutchison 4mins. 53⅕secs.	H. MacWilliam 18⅕secs.
Royal High School, Edin.	M. Edelman 16ft. 9½ins.	M. Edelman 5ft.	F. J. Shearer 11⅕secs.	J. G. Black 60⅕secs.	J. G. Black 2mins. 27⅕secs.	J. G. Black 5mins. 10⅕secs.	M. Edelman 20⅕secs.
Daniel Stewart's College	J. H. Stott 17ft. 4ins.	J. H. Stott 4ft. 9ins.	J. C. Kelt 11⅕secs.	J. M. Davie 52⅕secs.*	—	J. K. Ogilvie 5mins. 12secs.	—
George Watson's College	J. O. Mackellar 18ft. 2ins.	J. O. Mackellar & R. Millar 5ft. 1in.	J. O. Mackellar 11secs.	J. O. Mackellar 58⅕secs.	—	C. V. Smith 5mins. 25secs.	J. O. Mackellar 19⅕secs.

* Denotes a school record.

SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, LONDON

Less than a month now remains before our rowing cup will be again raced for and won, and I hope that at Molesey Regatta we shall see several schools keenly contesting for the trophy. The printers require these pages from me so early that at the time of writing it is impossible for me to tell how many crews will enter, but I hope that a goodly number will follow the example set in former years by Beaumont College, King's School, Worcester, Westminster, Kingston Grammar School, and Imperial Service College. Those schools which have not yet definitely decided to send a "four" are invited to do so at once; indeed, there is little time to waste, for in about a fortnight's time the closing date for entries will have been reached. Once again I give the very simple conditions under which the Public Schools Challenge Rowing Cup is competed for:—

(1) *The race is to be rowed in sliding clinker fours, and may be contested by a crew from any public school in the kingdom.*

(2) *Schools may bring their own boats, or, if preferred, one will be provided for them at Molesey.*

(3) *Entries should be sent to Mr. C. W. Kent, Fairhurst, East Molesey, as soon as possible, and not later than Wednesday, July 8th.*

(4) *If preliminary heats are necessitated by the number of entries, these may, at the discretion of the Committee, be rowed off on the afternoon of Friday, July 17th. The course is about three-quarters of a mile in length.*

I need scarcely add that any further information concerning the race will be willingly given on request. I can assure all rowing men that a very hearty welcome will be given them at Molesey on July 18th.

Durham School First Four.

Back row: H. K. Temperley (bow—11st. 3lbs.) and D. Armstrong (2—11st.).

Front row: B. H. Richardson (stroke—11st. 10lbs.) (captain) and H. G. H. Marshall (3—11st. 9lbs.).

Since publishing our article on rowing in our June issue we have heard from several other schools concerning their achievements of this season. King Edward VI. School, Norwich, which has the distinction of having the only eight-oared boat on their river, have shown in their house races this year that they have many young oarsmen of promise. A photograph of the school "four" is reproduced on page 959.

The outlook at King's School, Canterbury, is pretty hopeful all round,

for while the captain, C. W. Barber, is the only man left from last year's first boat, some good men have come on, and it is expected that the second crew will be well up to the standard of recent years. In the junior crews there is a good deal of promising material, which in a year or two's time will doubtless be doing good work on the Stour.

———

St. Peter's, York, has had a most successful term, and my informant pays a great tribute to the coaching of Mr. A. Milner, of St. Catherine's, Cambridge. The school crew, which is composed of S. C. West, bow, 9st. 7lbs.; M. S. O. Johnson, 11st.; H. Richardson, 10st. 2lbs.; and S. B. E. Reynolds, 10st. (stroke and captain), with H. Metcalfe, 5st. 3lbs. (cox) intend to compete in the York City Rowing Club Regatta in July, and I wish them all success. It is rather a long way from York to London, but I should like to see St. Peter's at Molesey. Perhaps now that, as I am told, the school as a whole is showing greatly increased interest in the rowing, we may presently see it represented on the Thames.

Monmouth Grammar School First Four.

Standing: M. Vyvyan (bow), W. G. T. Edwards (2).
Seated: C. Shaw (3) (captain), Mr. N. C. Elstob, T. Cunliffe (stroke), J. J. Whitfield (cox).

To quote my correspondent:—

"The annual race between crews representing day-boys and the School House in clinker fours was this year supplemented by the presence of a third boat, representing the recently opened Grove House. A triangular contest, therefore, was the result. The day-boys and the Grove House were drawn to meet each other in the first heat. An excellent race was witnessed in which the Grove led at the outset. The day-boys, however, rowed a longer and steadier stroke, and, drawing away after going half-way, won by a length and a quarter. A few days later the winning crew met the School House who were considerably heavier; their advantage in weight enabled the latter to get off with the lead, but the day-boys were well clear at half-way, and eventually won by a length and a half. They were stroked by S. B. Reynolds, who showed admirable judgment and kept a good length.

"A week later the annual fixture between the School and the York City Rowing Club fell due. The School had done well against a scratch crew during their practice work. The crews rowed in clinker fours over a distance of about five furlongs. The City turned out a considerably heavier and apparently stronger crew. The School lost the toss, and with it the choice of station, which, owing to the swollen state of the river, was a great disadvantage. The boats got off to a good start with the City leading a third of a length. The School gradually drew level until rounding the bend, when, owing to their outside position, the City gained a great advantage from the current. They continued to gain rapidly until shooting Scarborough Bridge, when there was a length of daylight between the boats. The School then made a really great spurt, and in the last few hundred yards went up rapidly, so much so that at the finish they were only half a length behind York City.

"It was generally agreed that the choice of stations made all the difference to the result of the race. It was a very fine performance on the part of the School against a boat comprised of older, heavier, and more experienced oarsmen. G. S. Reynolds

showed great determination as stroke in his final spurt, and was very well supported by the rest of the crew.

"The School concluded a most successful term's rowing by an easy victory over an Old Boys crew by six lengths. It was, however, a very gratifying feature that this race could be arranged, and contributed to the increased interest in rowing, as it is many years since the last race with the Old Peterites was rowed."

There is not the slightest doubt that the popularity of lawn tennis is tremendously on the increase, and, though I am most certainly not one of those people who prophesy that before very long it will take precedence of cricket in general favour, I am very much of the opinion that more and more fellows will take it up as an auxiliary game. Cricket is the finest of all field games, but tennis has many points in its own favour which must not be overlooked, one of the foremost being the fact that a set can be enjoyed in circumstances when the arranging of a cricket match is impossible. Those who scorn tennis as an effeminate game are becoming a fast-dwindling host, for an hour or so on the courts can provide a sufficiency of strenuous exercise as the strongest and fittest fellow can wish for.

To the man who has shown that he is no rabbit at cricket, I cannot see what possible harm can come if he indulges in tennis as an additional pastime. The games are not antagonistic to each other; proficiency with the racket will not in any way handicap you on the cricket field. In both cases judgment of pace, strength of wrist, quickness of eye, and intelligent anticipation of the other man's intentions are called into play.

These are the faculties which must be developed in practically all ball games. The notable exceptions being golf, billiards, and croquet, where we are called upon to strike not a moving but a still ball.

I certainly think a fellow ought to win his spurs at cricket before he turns his attention to tennis. To my mind it is inconceivable that anyone can play the court game well without having in him those qualities which go to the making of a cricketer. In other words, if a boy puts forward the argument that he likes tennis *because* he's no good at cricket, I suspect that in his particular case lawn tennis does, as its opponents allege, "offer immense opportunities to the slacker." You rarely find a fellow who is fairly useful in one field game absolutely useless at another, for the very keenness which has earned him success at one will generally rescue him from the beginner's ineptitude in the other.

Norwich School Four.

Recently I invited Captainites to express an opinion on the advisability or otherwise of encouraging lawn tennis at Public Schools, and the replies that I have received make very interesting reading. The matter was discussed in an unusually amiable way, and few indeed of those who contributed to the argument showed themselves either downright hostile or enthusiastically in favour of the idea. The "noes"

admitted that tennis was a much better game than it looked at first sight, and the "layes" frankly allowed that there were grave difficulties in the way, though they fancied they were not altogether insuperable.

Most of those who voted for the encouragement did so because it was high time, they thought, that Britain got a good grip of the Davis Cup—now in the possession of the United States—and how, they asked, were we to produce first-class players in the years to come unless we trained them at our schools? But it is just as useful that we should remain supreme in the world of cricket, and the opponents of the idea were unanimous in declaring that the adoption of tennis would do irreparable harm to the older game; and, indeed, little doubt can remain on this point.

A very material difficulty in the matter of introducing tennis into schools is the question of expense and the considerable space required for the laying out of sufficient courts, and still another one, the fact that comparatively few fellows can take an active hand in the game at the same time. Altogether, I think that lawn tennis as a school game is neither practicable nor desirable, though in the holidays there is no reason at all why it should not be taken up. When a fellow has left school he will find tennis a game that he will thoroughly enjoy, and one that will keep him as fit as the proverbial fiddle, but while he has the opportunity let him get as much cricket as he possibly can.

Answers to Correspondents

School Sports Results

My thanks are due to the readers who have kindly sent the following information:—

Bowden College (Cheshire).—*Long Jump:* C. Bouette, 17ft. 3ins. *High Jump:* T. Kenworthy, 4ft. 8ins. 100 *Yards:* S. Brierley, 10⅕secs. *Mile:* M. Tabernacle, 5mins. 20secs.

Christ's College (Finchley).—*Long Jump:* F. S. Prettyman, 17ft. 6¾ins. *High Jump:* F. S. Prettyman, 4ft. 9½ins. 100 *Yards:* F. S. Prettyman, 11secs. *Quarter Mile:* F. S. Prettyman, 59⅘secs. *Half Mile:* (handicap) B. B. Kennet. *Mile:* W. M. Leeke, 5mins. 14secs.

Emanuel School (Wandsworth).—*Long Jump:* E. Fisher, 19ft. 3½ins. *High Jump:* E. Fisher, 4ft. 10½ins. 100 *Yards:* I. J. Allcock, 11⅖secs. *Quarter Mile:* R. R. Turner. *Mile:* J. H. Roberts. *Hurdles:* E. Fisher, 18½secs.

Exeter School.—*Long Jump:* Galley, 18ft. 4½ins. *High Jump:* Tucker i., 4ft. 10¾ins. 100 *Yards:* Williams iii., 11⅗secs. *Quarter Mile:* Williams iii. and Tucker i., 59⅖secs. *Mile:* Forster-Morris, 5mins. 15secs. *Hurdles:* Tucker i., 19⅕secs.

Harrison College (St. Michael).—*Long Jump:* F. N. Grammen, 19ft. 3ins. *High Jump:* F. N. Grammen, 5ft. 3ins. 100 *Yards:* J. H. Carrington, 11secs. *Quarter Mile:* J. H. Carrington, 61⅕secs. *Half Mile:* J. H. Carrington, 2mins. 33secs.

The Lodge School (Barbados).—*Long Jump:* C. D. Woolward, 19ft. 3½ins. *High Jump:* C. D. Woolward, 4ft. 11ins. 100 *Yards:* C. D. Woolward, 10⅕secs. *Quarter Mile:* C. D. Woolward, 60⅕secs. *Half Mile* (handicap): C. I. Farmer.

Manchester Grammar School.—*Long Jump:* J. E. Haygarth, 17ft. 0¾in. *High Jump:* F. B. Melland, 5ft. 1in. 100 *Yards:* J. E. Haygarth, 10⅗secs. (school record). *Quarter Mile:* T. M. Gribbin. *Half Mile:* T. M. Gribbin, 2mins. 15secs. *Mile:* C. R. Larmuth, 5mins. 9⅖secs. *Hurdles:* F. W. Littlewood, 18½secs. (school record).

Oxford High School.—*Long Jump:* F. C. Lay, 16ft. 11½ins. *High Jump:* R. N. Baylis, 5ft. 1in. 100 *Yards:* H. Chatfield, 11⅕secs. *Quarter Mile:* F. F. Hunt, 56secs. (school record). *Half Mile:* 2mins. 16secs. *Mile:* H. Pollicott, 5mins. 28secs.

Perse School.—*Long Jump:* J. H. R. Rawes, 17ft. 6ins. *High Jump:* P. Mason and J. H. A. Lore, 5ft. 100 *Yards:* J. H. R. Rawes, 11⅗secs. *Quarter Mile:* J. Williams, 57⅖secs. *Half Mile:* J. Williams, 2mins. 15secs. *Mile:* F. R. Leavis, 5mins. 12⅖secs.

Queen's Royal College (Trinidad).—*Long Jump:* Wallen, 19ft. 2ins. *High Jump:* Johnson, 5ft. 3ins. 100 *Yards:* Wallen, 10⅕secs. *Quarter Mile:* Wallen, 55½secs. *Half Mile:* Telfer.

Shropshire Secondary Schools.—*Long Jump:* Edwards (Newport), 17ft. 6¾ins. *High Jump:* Parsonage (Whitchurch), 5ft. 100 *Yards:* D. Spurway (Bridgnorth), 11⅖secs. *Quarter Mile:* R. Dawes (Bridgnorth), 58secs. *Mile:* A. J. Steward (Bridgnorth), 5mins. 22⅕secs.

General

The Correspondent who last month sent me the results of the Oundle School sports wouldn't keep a job long as a sporting reporter, for another Oundle reader informs me that four of these results were incorrect. The long jump and the hurdles were won by J. Greaves, Hill won the quarter-mile, and in the high jump Sanfuentes and Leach were bracketed with 4ft. 10½ins. But possibly my original correspondent, anxious not to be late for press-day, tried his hand at prophecy, in which case I award him an "honourable mention" for his bright effort.

R. R. L.—You will find much useful information about ferrets in "Ferrets and Ferreting," published at 1s. by Messrs. L. Upcott Gill, Bazaar Buildings, Drury Lane, London, W.C.

D. G. M. (Glasgow).—Thanks for the photograph, but it is hardly suitable for reproduction in The Captain.

A. Colly points out that (in spite of the old tag "because you are born in a stable you are not necessarily a horse") a child born in the British Dominions is legally a British subject, though both his parents may be foreign. Such a child, however, when he comes of age and provided he is under no disability, may make a declaration of alienage, when he ceases to be a British subject.

Acknowledgments and thanks are also due to: **Ad., C. B.** (Kensington), **Dormitory Five, W. M. G.** (Manchester), and **T. U. L.**

THE OLD FAG.

GOOD LUCK TO THE "SHAMROCK"!

SHAMROCK IV.,

with which Sir Thomas Lipton hopes to bring the America Cup to England, measures 110ft. overall; 75ft. at the waterline, and 22ft. beam. She has rounded bows, and a hollow mainmast of record length. Her deck is of five thicknesses of wood, which together are less than an inch thick, covered with canvas to keep it watertight. On this is a thin layer of cork to prevent the crew from slipping. Some slight alterations may probably be made before the yacht crosses the Atlantic.

With the air of an old international Nye patted the turf, then glanced at the demon bowler, who was talking earnestly to his captain.

Teaching Pillikin to Bowl

A Harley Cricket Story

By HYLTON CLEAVER Illustrated by H. M. Brock, R.I.

I

THE small parson with the large glasses from which the reflected sun radiated in most directions, stood looking up into Mason's face. Mason, from the comparatively stupendous height of six foot nothing, looked down into the small parson's. The small parson spoke.

"Pardon me," said he, "but I was thinking of sending my boy to Harley next term. I thought, perhaps, you could tell me something—there are often little—little hints—helpful suggestions." He paused.

Mason nodded encouragingly.

"I do not wish him to mix—that is—he is going there strictly to work, you understand. I am anxious that he should not be—should not be deviated from that path. I wish to make sure that his studious habits—for he is a studious boy—will be encouraged. He does not care to mix with the—the rougher element. At his preparatory school he was left alone. He was, I think, admired—loved by the masters. He has no stupid longing for games. I have explained to him in our—in our little talks together—the necessity for hard work in life—the time which most boys so stupidly waste on field sports. At one time he played a good deal with a boy cousin—too much—it was unnecessary—dangerous. Now I have, I think, entirely changed his point of view. His object to-day is to work. I want that to be—to be encouraged. You—I hear that you are captain of Harley—you might, I thought, be able to assist me?"

Mason still looked down into this small parson's face, with its two little circles of dazzling light and its thin-lipped little mouth, and the small parson looked up trustfully, hopefully, like a small boy asking a City policeman the way.

"I am captain of *cricket*," said Mason, with slow, telling directness.

The expression on the small parson's face underwent a startling change. Hope changed to pained disappointment.

Mason gazed over the hills, somewhat impolitely. In the next meadow, cows were wandering aimlessly from spot to spot like old ladies at a garden party. Closer, two men knelt alertly beside a high-spirited Primus stove. Behind them, certain highly incapable girls were laying a cloth on the grass, and scattering knives and forks with an abandon that suggested some novel paper-chase. In the lane, an intensely worried little man was standing beside a pony trap, filling his arms with stores, whilst from time to time he bellowed frenziedly to the men at the stove to the effect that he had broken a bottle of salad dressing.

Mason was always bored at picnics. As he looked round disinterestedly at the other little groups talking or helping to spread the sumptuous repast, the small parson still chattered on. Now and again Mason caught suggestive words and phrases—expressions of hope that Mason could assist this industrious little boy in his attack upon the prize for Latin verse; could, perhaps, introduce him to the seniors, put in a good word on his behalf with the harsher masters.

Twice Mason strove to break away. He answered abruptly, coldly. It was no good. The small parson followed him, babbling his son's praises. He was, it seemed, an ultra-affectionate boy, of marked sensitiveness: he loved work—was clever.

The call to lunch saved Mason; he moved smartly towards the veal and ham pie, and sat down hurriedly between two members of the party.

It was a large gathering, in which few knew each other; but Mason soon got into conversation with his left-hand neighbour, and presently he slyly indicated the small parson, who was sitting by himself under a hedge, gobbling hard-boiled eggs with the most intolerable greed.

"Poisonous little bore, that," said Mason, relating his own experience. "What's his name, d'you know?"

The other looked across at the hedge, and pondered a moment, then:—

"Local vicar, I think," he said. "Don't

know him myself; heard my people speak of him. His name's Pillikin, I fancy."

"Pillikin," repeated Mason. "Good. His offspring shall be a marked man. There will be loud huzzahs on the day that he trudges into Harley, covered in dust. I'll look out for him."

"Hot enough," ventured Mason's other neighbour, presently, "for August."

"Don't know about that," said Mason; "generally get snow and sleet in August." He felt irritable.

II

LOOKING back upon the day when, three weeks after the hated picnic, Harley played their first match against Kellingham, their greatest rivals, the point that is most remarkable is, perhaps, the infinite variety of moods, the degrees of elation and depression with which Mason was affected during the day. A typical April Sunday was not in it with Mason's inward fluctuations whilst that match was in progress.

Firstly he had looked forward to the game with pleasurable anticipation, for his last three scores of 48, 137, and 79 indicated that he was well in form. The day, too, had dawned bright and warm, and Mason had stood with a pontifical air on the steps of the cricket pavilion and watched the sun shining on to the Harley First Eleven ground with its sward of billiard-table smoothness stretching away under a cloudless sky. Later, the Kellingham Eleven had taken the field, with Rick and Winter, of Harley, plodding in their rear, padded and gloved, and he had subsided into a deck-chair, pulled his white hat over his eyes, and prepared to chew his blade of grass and watch calmly, critically. Undoubtedly there was, at that time, laziness in the air; the slow-moving, white-clad figures in the middle distance were restful to the eye. He lay back, picturing the delightful manner in which loose long-hops would be driven by him to the boundary; the canny way in which the ball would speed over the grass, hopping and skipping with pride at the excellent stroke that had dispatched it.

So pleasant did Mason find these musings that a wicket had fallen before he realised that there was anything in the play meriting that calm, critical attention that he professed to give. Murmurings in the pavilion reached his ears soon after that first defeated batsman had come in. Rick, the gentleman in point, was explaining away his fall, basing his defence, so it seemed, chiefly upon the scandal that the man bowled googlies. Good ones. Mason turned meditatively to where Weldon, captain of football and fast bowler of the Eleven, sat beside him, looked at him from under the brim of his hat with the somnolent, reflective stare of your amiable sun-basker on a warm day, then bent his eyes upon the field again.

"Why go to the Wonder Zoo?" said Weldon, thoughtfully.

"Eh?" said Mason

Weldon nodded his head in the direction of the wicket.

"The googlie man," he observed.

He was just picking up the ball, as Mason's wandering gaze lighted upon him—a small boy with wild, untrained hair, and shirt sleeves that hung unbuttoned round his wrists; whose trousers, cut on the seafaring pattern, flapped in the breeze as he stepped jauntily away from the wicket.

Mason looked from him to Winter, who stood waiting at the batting end, with the comfortable stance of a born batsman thoroughly at home. Such a stance one sees in sketches of people like Hobbs. The bowler, who had been approaching in a curious zigzag manner, and at a pace which attained neither the dignity of a dead march nor the quaint jubilance of a jog-trot, came in due course to the wicket, whirled his arm fantastically from behind his back, and dispatched the ball. Winter flung out his left leg confidently, lifted his bat, then hesitated, made as if to play back, and, finally attempting a late cut, missed the ball altogether.

Mason watched this in silence, unmoved. Somewhere a small boy sneezed. The bowler continued the practice.

Eight minutes later, Winter, who to his friends seemed to have aged considerably during his stay at the wicket, succumbed, and returned to the pavilion babbling strangely of a ball which had broken thirteen times, dodging about the pitch as if following a crochet pattern, and finally, curling round his legs, had come back and shot in under his bat.

Mason continued to watch from beneath the shading brim of his white hat.

From time to time the little googlie boy secured a wicket, causing the later batsmen to adopt the attitude of men who had "heard tell." Laing, the school captain, withstood the attack for twenty minutes, at the end of which he was dismissed for a duck; others crouched cautiously over their bats, shoulders hunched, bodies squeezed together in the manner favoured by peckish cats expecting mice. This cramped attitude of itself proved their undoing. They

flicked nervously at bad balls, steering them cunningly into the cavernous hands of point, or they suddenly opened their shoulders at balls of consummate guile, missing by yards.

Now, when four wickets had fallen before this young magician's prowess, and the score stood at thirty-two for five, Mason suddenly shot out his legs and jumped to his feet.

"There seems," he remarked, "to be a sort of rot setting in, Weldon."

Weldon was unstrapping his pads preparatory to describing his brief stay at the wickets, and the circumstances which had occasioned his return; he nodded lugubriously.

"What's the matter?" asked Mason. "Sun in your eyes?"

"At present," replied Weldon, "the sun is immediately behind the head of the batsman facing the googlie bowler's end. Suppose you take your little cricket bat, and wander out on to the pitch yourself. You would be *sure* to be able to tell us what's wrong."

"Going in next," was the answer. "I'll have a shot at knocking him off his length."

"Length!" repeated Weldon, satirically. "Hasn't got any length. He's only mixing his twists."

Mason had not long to wait for his chance. For a few minutes he sat back in his chair, his bat resting between his padded legs; a rat-like boy with a four-and-sixpenny camera photographed him without being seen. Shortly, another wicket fell, and Mason stood up, bracing himself gladiatorially. He stepped casually out of the pavilion, striding defiantly towards the battle-field. As he passed West at the non-batting end, he murmured the momentous words, "Stick it, Jammy Face," then, coming to his crease, he realised happily that he was not facing the googlie man; a Kellingham fast bowler had secured the last wicket. Also Mason was fond of fast bowlers. He took guard menacingly, glanced round the field, loosened his wrists in the finicking way of a golfer addressing his ball before a few gaping idlers. Then, in a few seconds, he had opened had his score with three, and when the applause subsided, realised that "over" had been called, and that now indeed he was face to face with the demon who had been demolishing Harley cricket.

The little demon stood in the shadow of the guardian umpire, and peered at him foxily. Mason glared round the field again, shook himself together, and was ready. For a time it was, as the boxing reports declare, a good fight, but looking back one can see that in reality there was only one man in it. Mason began by jumping two yards out of his crease, and smiting the first ball heavenwards, whence long-on nearly secured it. After this he whanged, poked, or blocked according to a judgment which proved in each and every case to be misguided. Another over from the fast bowler to a certain degree restored his shattered nerves, and gave him seven more runs. Then, however, facing the googlie man again he cut savagely at an apparent off-break; the ball changed its mind, and dropped nervelessly from the inside edge of his bat on to his middle-stump.

Back in the pavilion, he sank again into his deck-chair; once more the brim of his white hat came down moodily over his nose. He watched calmly, critically. All that was left of the Harley side went in and came out, and the only man to whom any kudos accrued was Hillyer, the wicket-keeper, who, going in last, had a blind smack at two balls, lifting them into obscurity, sent another just over the head of cover-point, and was eventually run out in attempting to avoid the googlie man at the end of an over. Two other Harleyans gained some notoriety through being dismissed by non-googlie bowlers. The total was sixty-three runs, and the youth who had done the damage secured seven wickets for thirty, bowling unchanged throughout.

As the Kellingham eleven came in, joyful in bearing, Mason rose once again from his throne, and came down the steps to meet his rival captain.

"What's his name, Stuart?" he asked.

Stuart dug him playfully in the ribs.

"Pillikin," said he. "Pillikin. Should we be raffling him, will you take tickets?"

Mason hesitated, looked into vacancy with sudden earnestness, turned again to Stuart.

"Pillikin," said he. "I've heard that name before. Is he a new chap?"

"This term; son of a parson, I believe. He took every wicket in his first house match, and, coming on at the nets, bowled me twice in five balls, and I fancy myself at nets."

The divers moods that assailed Mason that day were all, of course, going on under the surface. Outwardly he had been as cool as ever throughout. Now he just shifted his hat, then rammed his hands deep into the pockets of his blazer. A sudden light of recollection—something akin to that of the man who suddenly remembers that he has left his umbrella in the train—had come into his face. He looked hard at Stuart.

"Great Scott!" he said, solemnly.

"What's wrong?"

Mason spoke earnestly.

"Why—how—— D'you know, Stuart, I met that man's father in the holidays. D'you know——"

He stopped. The thing as he now saw it was pathetic, lamentably absurd. He mumbled to himself, then made an angry gesture, and turned away. For a few moments he stood alone. Harleyans buzzed round him. He dared not tell them. He, captain of Harley cricket, had been deceived into turning away from the school an epoch-making cricketer, whom Fate's breezes had now blown into Harley's great rival school. This was the result—disaster. It was so sudden, so altogether stupid, so sickening to a man of his keenness. As all these glaring facts shot before his mind's eye he looked round for some ready, sympathetic ear; stepped towards Weldon, and began:—

"D'you know," said he, "most remarkable thing. Can't understand it. D'you know——"

"Just a mo., Mason," said Welldon, and disappeared into the changing-room.

Turning once more he shot out his hand and grabbed Rick as he passed.

"I say," said he. "Just come here a sec. I want to tell you——"

"Half a jiffy," said Rick. "Just off to get a hat. Wait a mo."

People are always insanely bustling when one needs their attention.

Mason, gurgling with wonder at his discovery, and aching with secret anger and excitement, gave it up, and turned disconsolately towards his deck chair with the score-book, which he proceeded to examine judicially. Then suddenly he realised that the great little Pillikin—wonder of the day—was leaning over the rail in front of him.

He leant forward, plucking at the demon's coat.

"'Scuse me," said he, "but I b'lieve I met your governor in the Easter holidays. Isn't he Vicar of Warnbridge?"

"That's right," said the googlie terror, affably. "But I don't think—in fact I'm sure—you didn't meet him at Easter. He was away with us. Got knocked up. We all went away for three weeks. You probably met his cousin. He was the *locum*. Man called Nye."

"*What!*" said Mason. "*Not* your governor? But he talked a lot about you. Said how industrious you were—weren't to go in for games, and all that. I thought you were coming to Harley."

Pillikin chuckled.

"That's him," said he; "that's old Arthur Nye. His son *has* gone to Harley. Poor old Dick! He and I used to see a good deal of one another at one time. No, *my* governor's an old Cambridge Blue. Jolly good sportsman."

But Mason was gripping the googlie bowler's arm hard.

"Look here," said he, tensely, "d'you say the kid Nye *is* at Harley?"

"Should be," said Pillikin, "unless he's bolted."

"But, my good sir—my fag's name is Nye, and he *is* a new chap."

"Really?" said Pillikin.

Mason removed his hand with the gesture of a man mystically defeated by Fate.

"Strike a light," said he, helplessly, "this is absurd."

"He is a bit," said Pillikin. "Are we having grub now?"

III

The scene changes. The curtain falls with a loud bang on the green fields of Harley, and, rising in due course, presents Mason's study on the evening of the same day.

Nye stood solemnly in the doorway.

"Come right in, Nye," said Mason, and he obeyed.

A small boy, very obviously—now that one came to look—the son of the small parson of the picnic, similarly spectacled, similarly thin-lipped, short of hair, narrow of trouser, but clean of face and collar, neat of bootlace.

"Nye," said Mason, from the recesses of an armchair (he was a great man for chairs, Mason), "I only realised to-day that I had the pleasure of meeting your governor in the holidays when he was at Warnbridge."

"Did you?" said Nye.

"I did," said Mason.

"Yes," said Nye, rather pointedly, "he told me about you."

There was a pause.

"Also," said the cricket captain, "I have to-day had the pleasure of meeting yet another relation of yours—cousin once removed or something. Young Pillikin."

"Did you?" said Nye.

"Yes," said Mason.

There was another pause.

"He's playing cricket," said Mason, "for Kellingham. For the First Eleven," he added, impressively. "How old is he? About fifteen, I s'pose. How old are you? About the same. Why aren't you playing for Harley First Eleven,

Nye? No doubt you will say it is because you have not been asked."

"Why is Eric—I mean, of course, Pillikin—why is he playing for Kellingham, Mason?"

"To-day," said Mason, "he took seven for thirty. They say that in his first house match he took every wicket. I tried to knock him off. He made an ass of me. I s'pose—yes, I should say, Nye, that that is why he is playing for Kellingham."

"But he is not a good bowler."

"Eh?"

"He is not a good bowler."

"To-day," repeated Mason, "he took seven for thirty. In his first house match——"

"Oh, yes," said Nye, "I know. But he is not *good*. He looks difficult, and he bowls one or two queer balls; when he is strange to men he frightens them. You will find that when he has been there about a month all the men at the practice nets will be playing his balls with perfect confidence."

The little spectacled boy delivered this dictum fearlessly, and with a clear voice. He stood just inside the door looking very wise and rather old; in no way a cricketer. Mason gazed upon him patronisingly.

"I s'pose," said he, "that there's some little jealousy or something between your people and the Pillikins. I mean when a man takes seven for thirty, and——"

Nye interrupted.

"I simply say," he repeated, "that he is not good. For a long time I played with him for hours every day. We started in a small back garden. Then we used a full-sized pitch on a common. He always bowled, I always batted. I might almost say," he remarked, casually, "that I *taught* him to bowl."

"*Taught* him?"

"Scientifically. I used to study cricket articles. I worked out the theory of googlies. I taught him spin."

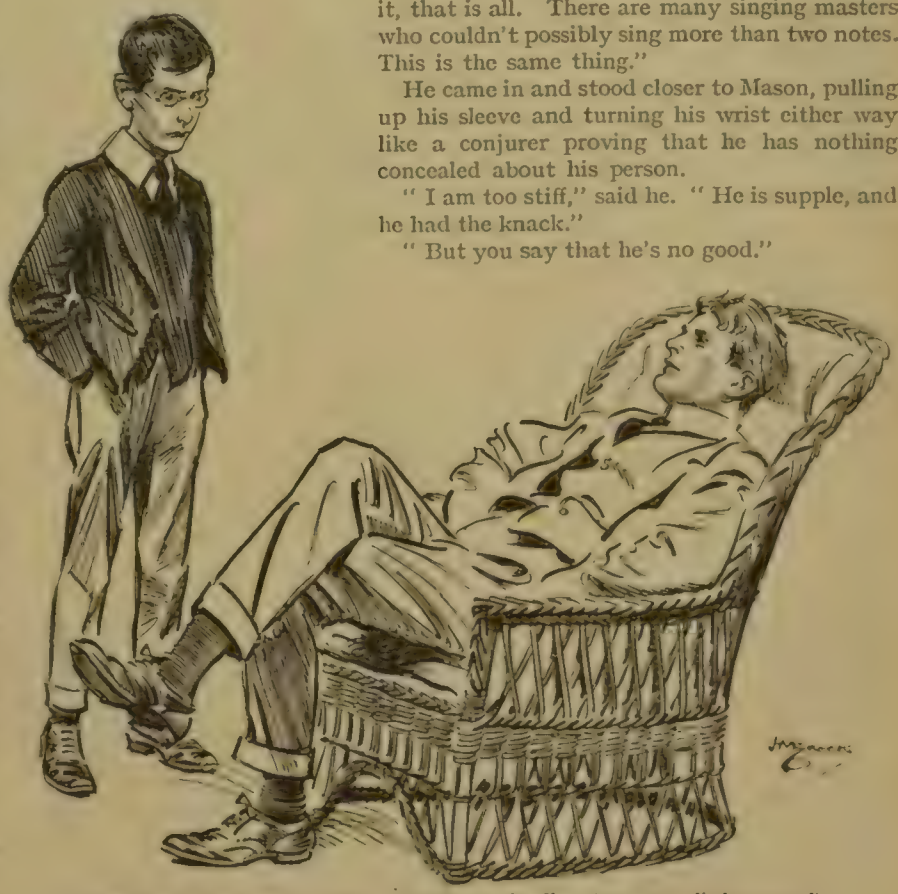
"Can you—can you—bowl like that yourself?" said Mason, wildly.

"No—I cannot bowl. I know the theory of it, that is all. There are many singing masters who couldn't possibly sing more than two notes. This is the same thing."

He came in and stood closer to Mason, pulling up his sleeve and turning his wrist either way like a conjurer proving that he has nothing concealed about his person.

"I am too stiff," said he. "He is supple, and he had the knack."

"But you say that he's no good."



"If you really want me to play, I might, but it all matters very little to me."

"*I* do not think he is," said Nye, "because I can play his balls. After we had played together for about a year he could only bowl me when it got dusk and I could not see his action or the ball. He could always bowl other people—that is, until they got to know him. If a good batsman got to know his bowling he would soon be able to score freely."

"I don't agree," said Mason, "you want

years of practice with googlie bowlers before you can master the idea."

Nye shrugged his shoulders—hesitated.

"Do you mind," said he, "if I go now, Mason? I am a little busy with some logarithms."

"Logarithms!" said Mason. "What form are you in?"

"The third."

"Well, my good sir," said Mason, "they don't tackle logarithms in the third."

Nye smiled in a superior manner.

"I do them in my spare time," he explained. "It's a hobby of mine. I love them. They're"—he hesitated, then plunged—"they're very much better—than rabbits."

IV

MASON'S first move after this was to visit Rick, the team secretary, in his study.

"Look here, Rick," said he, as soon as he was inside the door, "what's the date of the return?"

"What return?" said Rick. "This isn't a railway station booking office."

"The other Kellingham match, you ass."

"The other Kellingham match, you ass. Very well, it's in three weeks' time. Don't you remember we had a job to fix it up?"

"Our incapable secretary," said Mason, "finds it a job to fix anything up"

"Not at all. The fact of the matter——"

"I came in," said Mason, "to tell you more about Pillikin."

"Sit down," said Rick.

Mason sat down, leant forward with his elbows on his knees; now and again he wagged a finger magisterially.

"I've tackled this kid Nye," he explained; "my fag, you know. He's a queer little cuss—enormous glasses, bulging forehead, and all that."

"Learned?" said Rick.

"I suppose so. Well, what d'you think? He says that he practically taught Pillikin to bowl, says he can play him for hours on end. Looks at it from the scientific point of view. He doesn't seem to think much of Pillikin."

"He says he can *play* him?"

"Yes—for hours."

There was a pause.

"D'you think he can?" said Rick, presently.

"He doesn't swank about it, so I should think he's probably right. He just makes the statement. He doesn't seem very interested, really."

"And you think that Pillikin will topple us all out again in the next match?"

"I should think he's bound to, after to-day's exhibition, unless——"

"Well?"

"Unless we can get the first wicket men to make a stand and give the other people confidence. They'll be afraid of the man this time. We must have someone who can go in, and show 'em that this googlie stuff is all my eye."

"I begin to see light," said Rick.

"I've thought it over. This kid impressed me. He doesn't bound on to my lap and plead for a trial. He just states quite casually that he's played the man's stuff all his life, and that, to him, it's tosh."

"Ah!" said Rick.

"And so," said Mason, thumping on the table, "what I've come to say is this: that if Nye can prevent another rot—if he can break this man's heart by playing him for a couple of hours and by running so as to get the bowling from that end—he'll play for the first."

"And who goes out?"

"West—or Simpson."

"You'll try him at nets?"

"Of course," said Mason.

That, however, was where Mason was wrong. Nye, spoken to on the matter, displayed no enthusiasm. At first he merely said that he had not the time to play cricket again. He was working too hard; and he stuck out. Mason explained.

"It's about Pillikin," he said. "We play Kellingham again in three weeks' time, and, unless we can do better, we shall get badly whopped again. That would be a bad thing for Harley—and you're a Harleyan, Nye."

"Well, Mason?" said Nye.

"It has occurred to me," said Mason, "that, if what you say is true; if, that is to say, you *can* make rings round Pillikin; if he really *can't* bowl you, you ought to come into the team for that match and perform. Before I chose you, of course, I should want to see you at nets and watch your form; and, unless you turn up, how am I to watch you?"

"Personally," said Nye, loftily, "I'm not very interested. It all matters very little to me, and I certainly can't come to nets. I don't *want* to play; but, if we are playing Kellingham, I should probably go over with you to see Pillikin, and, if you really want me to play—well, p'r'aps I could."

"But, dash it!" said Mason. "We must see you first."

"I'm afraid I can't come to nets," said Nye.

"Then, my good sir," said Mason, "how are we to see your form?"

"I don't know. It's you who want me to play. *I* don't want to."

Mason looked down at his small determined face, and secretly rather admired the courage possessed by such a small boy who could yet argue with the captain of cricket at a big public school, and that with impunity.

He left him alone at last, realising that, for the time at all events, Nye held the whip-hand; but, during those three intervening weeks, he strove hard to bring the Harley "find" down to nets. Rick joined him, speaking first genially, then persuasively, and later forcibly. It was no good. They argued a great deal with him, sketching sensational word pictures illustrating devotion to the school, good sportsmanship, and keenness. Nye always had an answer for them. He argued that he was busy working for certain difficult examinations. If he went once to nets it would be so many hours wasted. Unless he took up the game again in real earnest, one visit was useless, and, above all, he always came back to his bedrock argument that he had not the time and that his father trusted him to work. He would be willing to exhibit his prowess once—against Pillikin. Further than that he would not go.

"What are you going to do?" said Rick, a few days before the match. "Shove him in and chance it?"

"I'll sleep on it to-night," said Mason. "I've seen Sainsbury, and he advises me to play him. In the morning I'll decide, and shove up the list. It's an annoying sensation, Rick, to feel that you're kowtowing to a fag!"

"For the sake," said Rick, heavily, "of the old school."

"Cheers!" said Mason.

Next day—the Thursday before the return match—the list went up, and a bombshell fell on the school. Mason and Rick had kept their secret well, and Nye, naturally enough, had not talked. Had he come down to the First Eleven nets rumour would, of course, have started upon a wild run round the school. As it was, few knew him at all, and of those few none knew that he could bat. When, therefore, the list went up, and showed the name of Nye at its bottom, discussion was loud and long. Most people supposed that the man was one of those older boys who sometimes came to Harley from other schools.

West, who had been dropped, was at a loss to know why. Other members of the team besieged Mason, demanding enlightenment.

Mason explained briefly.

"He's a kid," said he; "my fag, in fact. He knows that Kellingham googlie man's tricks from A to Z. He played with him for years. He's going in first with Rick, and he's going to try to get all the batting that end."

After this, the news soon whirled through the school, and a search for Nye was organised by enthusiasts of all ages and degrees of importance. Some found him. Two got into conversation. The remainder lived on in their gloomy ignorance, and waited for Saturday, turning up in force to spy him out, and observe his antics with the willow.

They met early—Pillikin and Nye—and shook hands without any great cordiality. Mason and Stuart also met at about the same time.

"Hullo, Mason," said the latter. "Have you found something, too?"

"How d'you mean?" asked Mason.

"The infant in grey," said Stuart.

He nodded towards Nye, who had left Pillikin and was strutting thoughtfully towards the pavilion. His trousers were narrow and grey, as opposed to Pillikin's which were baggy and white, his shirt was tightly buttoned across his throat, and a flaming red tie adorned it. A canvas belt of the same hue kept up his trousers. His feet were encased in large rubber-soled shoes, faintly reminiscent about the toes of Little Tich's dancing boots.

Mason strode across to him.

"I say," he said, "you're a bit conspicuous, young Nye. We don't wear ties on the field, you know, and we all have white trousers. You'll slip up in those rubber shoes I'm afraid, too. And—and I should try to get a white scarf or something to keep your bags up."

"I would rather be as I am," said Nye.

"Eh?"

"What does it matter? I shall not be seen again in the team."

"But you can borrow a pair of whites, man, and some cricket boots."

"I'd rather not," said Nye.

"But dash it all——" began Mason, then stopped.

He foresaw what his answer would be—"I don't *want* to play, Mason. It's you that are asking me to." He had heard that often enough before — the phrase dinned in his ears by reason of its constant repetition during the last three weeks. He realised, too, that Nye still had the whip-hand. He must hold in his

wrath just a little longer. Soon Nye would be out there making Pillikin look foolish, and the star of Harley would be gaily in the ascendant.

He turned away irritably, and sought Stuart again.

"We'd better toss," said he.

"Call to this." Stuart spun a coin.

"That coin," said Mason, "will be found to be lying tails uppermost."

"It is not," said Stuart, bending down to look. "We will go in first."

A quarter of an hour later Harley took the field, smiling, and in the centre of the group strolled Nye.

At deep-cover Nye had, of course, a fair amount of fielding to do, and it may be explained at once that he did it badly. Many balls shot past him—from appearances almost before he realised that they had been hit. He missed a reasonable catch. In throwing in, he once flung the ball wildly across the middle of the pitch and gave Kellingham two more runs. Several times he forgot to change his position at the end of an over, until bellowed at by the other ten men. Kellingham made 145; at the close of the innings the Harleyans came in from the field, still smiling in anticipatory glee. Nye strolled in indifferently, without any show of apologetic modesty in respect of his performance at cover. In response to Mason's wishes, he sat down two minutes later, and commenced to put on his pads.

Mason stood beside him.

"Don't forget," said he; "get the bowling. Take all Pillikin's stuff. Rick's very smart between wickets, and you'll find he can run anything. You think—you really think—you can play this man's stuff?"

"I tell you," replied Nye, a little shortly, "I practically taught him all the break and spin he knows."

"All right; go ahead. Good luck!"

He left him as the Kellinghamites started out, and made for his accustomed deck-chair, murmuring a few words of counsel to Rick on the way. Then he sat down, lolling back, hat tilted over his eyes, just as he had sat on the occasion of the original match, so disastrous for Harley. He concealed some slight nervousness behind a sedately critical gaze which he concentrated on the wicket. He still doubted the ability of this learned little boy, still wondered whether he had done right. And the learned little boy, guessing this, smiled to himself, and prepared to show his worth. There was something about him that reminded one of a prodigy in the orchestral walk of life.

Then, suddenly, people realised that Rick and he were leaving the pavilion, and, for some occult reason, they rose and cheered. There was something quaintly romantic, a quite exciting touch, in this novel effort to win a match. Nye went out to bat with Harley hearts trailing in his rear, wishing him luck. He noticed Pillikin's end, and made for it, patted needlessly round his wicket with the air of an old international playing once again for his Sunday-school team, glanced up the pitch at his cousin. Pillikin was talking earnestly to Stuart, his captain. He appeared faintly amused, seemed scarcely to have noticed the advent of Nye, and this rather annoyed the Harleyan. He did not like to be overlooked so demurely.

And what Pillikin was saying was this:—

"Look here, Stuart, this kid knows my stuff. He could play it all day. He's my cousin. He helped me learn googlies. He'll knock it all over the place. He's Harley's find. He's *their* reply to *me*."

Stuart laughed.

"All right," said he, "we'll have you off for a bit. Let Sanders have a go at him."

"Great Scott!" said Pillikin. "Don't do that, Stuart, for goodness' sake. We're awfully old rivals. He'd think I'd admitted I couldn't bowl him, and I've never admitted that to him. Let me try."

"Wait a minute," said Stuart. "I'm thinking."

"What about?"

Stuart smiled thoughtfully, hesitated a moment, then plunged.

"You say this man knows all your breaks and things?"

"He taught me."

"He looks a queer sort of animal."

"He is. But he's nuts on the scientific side of googlies."

"And you always *do* break?"

"Of course."

"And he knows that?"

"Yes. He taught me, I say."

"But he only taught you to bowl breaks. Could you," asked Stuart, solemnly, "bowl a perfectly straight ball?"

Pillikin laughed, and looked surprised.

"I suppose so," he said. "Yes—of course."

"Then," said Stuart, "try that. It's a chance. It's cunning. He'll expect you to break all over the place. He looks grim. If the ball never breaks at all you'll beat him. Send

down a simple, harmless lob—perfectly straight. Twig ? "

Pillikin thought for a moment, then laughed and swung his arm.

" Righto," said he. " By Jove ! If I *could* bowl him ! "

Stuart, with the air of a man who has been favourably compared to Edison, glided away into the slips.

Nye attracted the umpire's attention, and took guard ; then Pillikin, cutely enough, bowled a couple of very wily trial balls to the wicket-keeper. Nye watched them naïvely. Then he was ready.

The great crowd round the ground was hushed. He looked very small and impotent at the wicket, and folk watched with the kind of respectful silence that is granted champion golfers on the putting-green.

Then Pillikin, with his full white trousers still ballooning in the breeze, walked a few yards away from his crease, turned, and started his quaint approach. His hand curled out from behind his back ; Nye stood waiting, his bat held in a curious, club-like fashion, his knees stiff. The ball swung down. He lifted his bat quaintly, made a peculiar defensive stroke. He expected a double break ; instead, the ball swung on—there came the crack of a broken bail. A half-suppressed cry went round the ground. Pillikin chuckled delightedly. Then, as Nye turned away and started his tramp home, there was again that same deadly silence right round the ground. He strutted back to the pavilion at his own pace, and disappeared into the changing-room. Simpson came out. Still there was the same mystic hush.

Mason sat back in his chair, his heart thumping like a punching-ball well smitten. His hat was still well over his eyes. Few could rightly tell his expression. Rick stood behind him ; neither spoke.

Somehow the innings dragged on. With the score at sixty for six Mason went out and slammed furiously to right and left. With seventeen runs off one over he faced Pillikin again. Five minutes later he, too, was out, and his score was *eighteen*. The innings fizzled out. Pillikin took eight for thirty-two. By half-past four the match was decided.

Mason, miserable and angry, had sat stolidly through the innings, with the exception of his own period of batting. As time went on he had become more and more disgusted with Nye. The man had told of his own ability, he had refused proof, he had condescended to play ; finally, he had made a fool of himself and of Mason. He looked at this thing from all points of view, and he could see no excuse for this wretched little humbug. At last he sought him out. Something inside him was at bursting point, and it *had* to be relieved.

He found him sitting alone and apart, reading a book. He grabbed him offensively by the arm. As he did so he remembered that the little wretch had expressed no regret, had made no apology ; and he felt that something of this kind was due to him.

Mason was loth to bully any man for failing to come off in a match. No cricket captain does that. Yet somehow this seemed different. Mason felt that he had been fooled, and he wanted to say so.

Nye looked up nonchalantly. In his heart he, too, was desperately disappointed. He could not remember that Pillikin had ever before bowled him first ball—could not understand why his ingenious batting system had failed. He felt faintly ignominious and abashed, but he hid that.

" Don't you think," said Mason, " that, under the circumstances, it's a pity you didn't show us what you could do at nets ? "

Nye answered defiantly.

" *You* wanted me to play," he said. " It wasn't *my* wish."

" D'you think," said Mason, " it's quite sportsmanlike to take it all so calmly when you've made me look a blooming idiot—for trusting you ? "

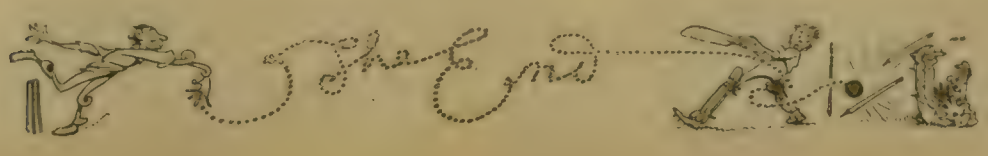
Nye gulped at the insult.

He rose to his feet, made a gesture, hesitated. He searched desperately for some excuse. Right down in the uttermost depths of his mind he suddenly unearthed a retort.

He looked up at Mason defiantly.

For a minute he lapsed, unawares, into schoolboy conversational errors.

" Well," said he. " Dash it, Mason, I like that ! After all, you were *beastly* to my father. We're quits."



THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

A Story of Mystery and Adventure in Tibet

By HERBERT STRANG

Illustrated by RENÉ BULL

Synopsis of Opening Instalments

THREE young tea-planters in Assam—Bob Jackson, Dick Forrester, and Alan Mackenzie—are camping one night after a tiger hunt, when from the jungle an Englishman staggers towards them in a delirious fever. They learn that he is a Captain Redfern, who had set out to explore the buried cities in Chinese Turkestan with an archæologist named Beresford, and they gather that he has escaped from some great peril, leaving his companion a prisoner in unknown hands. A rough plan is the only guide they find to the whereabouts of Beresford, but they set out to rescue him, leaving Redfern in the care of a neighbouring planter. As they start two Chinamen ask to accompany them as far as their ways lie together. The younger seems to be under some mysterious spell exercised by the other (a one-armed man named Wen Shih), for whom he acts as interpreter, and once, when alone with Forrester, he declares that he is a mandarin's son in the power of Wen Shih, and implores the Englishman to rescue him.

On the third night their native carriers desert them. Accompanied only by their cook and a shikari, the three reach an immense waterfall, and follow a pathway leading to a rift in a steep precipice. They proceed along this passage until suddenly a high iron shutter drops behind them. They find themselves prisoners in a Chinese fastness, the supreme ruler of which —a man of immense age—wears a mitre bearing an eye-shaped ornament from which a mysterious ray of destructive light can be made to flash forth. The old man decrees that the captives shall spend their lives in the service of the Temple of the Eye.

Later they encounter an Indian girl, who gives to Forrester a piece of mica-like substance, saying, "It saves from the Eye, sahib." Soon the prisoners are separated, and Forrester is led to an underground cave, where he meets Beresford, who shows him a well from which issues a radiance having marvellous properties. The corrosive power of this light they hope to use to bore a hole through the roof of the cavern.

Some days later Forrester finds in a cleft in the wall of the cave a small bone, in the hollow of which is a scrap of paper bearing the strange words: "Give me my bone."

CHAPTER XIV

HAMID GUL, HEAD COOK

MACKENZIE and Jackson, it will be remembered, had been removed from the temple before Forrester, at the close of the scene with the Old Man. They were taken back to their separate cells, and locked in for the rest of the day. Jackson's nerves were shaken all to pieces; Mackenzie, whose robuster physique was less affected, was in desperate anxiety as to Forrester's fate. He spent a wretched day, a still more wretched night. By turning his back on the monster he managed to fend off the worst effects of the baleful eye; but the consciousness that it was there behind him with its unwinking glare intensified his distress. When morning came, and he was escorted again to the foot of the rock stairway, he welcomed the respite afforded by the prospect of a day in the open air, and hoped against hope that the Old Man had relented, and would allow Forrester to join him.

Night brings counsel, and Mackenzie was a long-headed Scot. He had come to the decision that it would be sheer folly, after what had

happened, to repeat his refusal to work on the plantations. The depressing influence of solitude and the mysterious light was no doubt relied on by the Old Man to bring his prisoners to a proper docility. Well, Mackenzie would assume that virtue, if he had it not, and he would advise his friends, if they came, to fall in with his own plan: to work with apparent resignation, though always alert to seize on any opportunity of escape that might offer itself.

When he was handed a spade, therefore, by the priest who appeared to act as taskmaster, he accepted it, and set to work on the plot of ground assigned to him. But he took care not to ply his implement too energetically, stopping every now and again to mop his brow with his sleeve, and to heave the sigh appropriate to a forced labourer.

As the day wore on, and neither of his friends appeared, he feared the worst. Jackson's absence might easily be accounted for by a nervous breakdown natural to a man of his temperament; but Forrester would have come if he had been at liberty to do so, and it seemed only too likely that he had either been demolished by the Eye or that he was still confined to his cell, or possibly condemned to some other punishment whose nature Mackenzie could not guess. At the close of the day he sought to relieve his suspense by addressing a question to the priest, but received only a stony stare. He could not tell whether the man understood him or not.

Several days passed in the same dreary, hopeless fashion. Mackenzie kept away from the old *zamindar* who, though his daughter had been restored to him, was visibly broken down by a haunting dread of calamities yet to come. He exchanged only a few words now and again with Sher Jang, fearing, in the one case as in the other, that closer intercourse with them might tend to their harm. But, one morning, he was as much delighted as surprised to see Jackson appear at the head of the stairway. He had been supported in the climb, practically pushed up, by one of the priests. The taming process was evidently regarded as successful. From that time, the two friends remained constantly on the plateau, being given a small hut among the cluster nearest to the dwellings of the priests. It contained no furniture; their only bedding was a blanket apiece.

In the fresh air, and under the bracing influence of Mackenzie's companionship, Jackson in some degree recovered tone. The two friends worked side by side. No check was placed on their association; it was evidently assumed that they were resigned to their lot, or at any rate too much dominated by their fears to give trouble. After the first day together, they never spoke of Forrester; in their hearts they believed that they would see him no more.

But they sometimes speculated on the fate of Hamid Gul. They had never seen him since they passed his unconscious body in the rift. It seemed monstrous that so humble a member of their party should have fallen a victim to the Old Man's malignity; yet they could only surmise that, whatever the reason might be, the man had been put out of the way.

It was, therefore, with a joyous surprise that they saw him one day staggering across a field under a load of vegetables. Mackenzie called to him; but Hamid, though he must have heard the cry, pursued his way without so much as a turn of the head.

"There's a reason for that," said Mackenzie. "Hamid is no fool."

Some hours later, when work had ceased, and all the slaves had returned to their huts, a dark form appeared in the open doorway of that which Mackenzie and Jackson shared.

"Where is Forrester sahib, please to say, sahibs?" came in a whisper from Hamid Gul.

"Come away in, man," cried Mackenzie, "if it is safe."

"It is right as rain, sahib," replied the Bengali. "Chinky jossers believe me a one-eyed ass. But Forrester sahib?"

"We don't know. We fear he is dead."

Hamid's one eye and twisted features told rather of rage than of sorrow. He poured forth a torrent of abuse in his own tongue, invoking the direst curses on the heads of the oppressors, and the uttermost defilement of their graves.

"Where have you been all this time? What have they done to you?" asked Mackenzie.

"I am head cook and bottle-washer, sahib—may the sons of pigs boil everlastingly in oil! Hiked into kitchen, there I was, having sung my praises quite a lot. For sake of self and master, I pocketed feelings and dignity, and concocted that pilaff of lamb Forrester sahib was such nuts on. A bald-headed chap kept eye on me, and made me gobble a bit; then carried dish away, and told me in due course it was well. When he was gone, pig of Chinky cook put his nose out of joint and was exceedingly rude, saying many things in barbarous lingo of libellous nature."

"But you don't understand Chinese," Mackenzie interposed.

"Exactly, quite so, sahib; but he had a face! My sublime effort took the cake, sahibs. They offered me job on spot. Every day I made something fresh and bilious, and cook in office did not get look in. He lost his wool, sahibs, and one day set on me tooth and nails, and bald-head found us going at it hammer and tongs. Chinaman got bag, and I got crib."

Hamid went on to explain that the fly in his ointment was his employers' want of trust. His work was always done under the eyes of a priest, and he had to taste of every dish before it was removed. He was disgusted, too, because he received neither money nor thanks. He had never learnt who it was that consumed his viands; the dishes always came back empty, and his unknown master had evidently a keen tooth for dainty fare.

His quarters were a lean-to adjoining the kitchen. On the other side was the door through which the priest carried the dishes to and fro. Hamid had had the curiosity one day to follow the priest at a safe distance, but was brought up by a closed door. In the wall of the passage there was a grating, which had given him the idea that his employer must be a man of great wealth, for the bars of it appeared to be of pure gold. Once, to avoid the trouble of carrying a pail of dirty water to the field on which it was usually poured, he had been on the point of emptying it through the grating; but the priest had come by at that moment, and had rebuffed him with such violence, and used such alarming threats about the punishment of the Eye, that he had never ventured to save his labour again.

"Do you know anything about the punishment of the Eye?" Mackenzie asked.

"Devil a bit, sahib. My one optic is only feature I have to boast of, and it goes without saying that I cannot afford to lose it."

The Englishman felt that Hamid had much to be thankful for. It was clear that he had no suspicion of the horrors of the place, and they saw no reason for enlightening him. The less his fears the more useful he might be.

"Well, man, you had better not stop any longer," Mackenzie said. "And don't come here again; you may be spied on. But I wish you to keep your eyes open—your one is as good as two—and find out all you can. We are keen to get away; but we see no chance of it. Maybe you'll find out one of these days how they get down to the rift. Don't make any attempt to see us unless you have something important to communicate. We will always be on the look-out. You go into the fields sometimes. If we see you open and close your hand three times, we will know you have something to say, and we will find some way to hear you. But not here; it's maybe not safe."

"Better warn him against the Old Man," Jackson suggested.

"Ah, true! Your cooking, Hamid, is done for the master of the place, a very old Chinaman. You may never see him; if you do, watch him carefully, and, above all, never offend him. Now go, and mind yourself."

In giving instructions to Hamid Gul, Mackenzie had no definite hope. The man, being practically confined to his kitchen when within doors, was not in a position to ascertain for himself the interior arrangements of the place; and his ignorance of any languages but his own and English would prevent his understanding any conversation he might overhear among the Chinese. But he could be trusted to make the best use of such opportunities as might offer.

Thinking over the little information that Hamid had been able to give, Mackenzie was struck with a suspicion. The grating! Was it not likely that here, as in European castles, there were dungeons beneath the floor of the principal chambers? Might not Forrester be immured underground, in a cellar to which the grating gave access? He wished he had thought of this when Hamid was with them, and had inquired about the nature of the grating and the size of the opening it covered. Why had the priest objected to its use as a sink? Not from any tenderness towards prisoners, if prisoners there were. Either there must be, below, some treasure of the Old Man which water might injure, or—and here Mackenzie felt some excitement—it was desired that the existence of the aperture should not be known to the prisoners.

Impatient to question Hamid Gul, Mackenzie hoped every day to see him; but it was not until the third morning after his visit that the Bengali again appeared in the fields, with a basket slung on his back. He passed at some distance from the Englishmen, and they saw his left hand open and close three times. Looking around to make sure that no priest was on the watch, Mackenzie left his plot, struck off at an angle, and, slipping round a plantation of tea shrubs, met Hamid in the enclosure where he was digging truffles.

"Well?" he asked, eagerly.

"I have got a rise, sahib," the man replied. "Purely honorary; no pay!"

"What do you mean?"

"Rich food sometimes is cause of stomach

ache, sahib. After tiffin yesterday, bald-head comes to me—he has a face, sahib!—and says, 'Hai! Come along!' Off I trot, knees playing castanets, blue funk, because of his face. Along passage, into room, another room, much to flabbergastation of humble self; for what do I see but gold everywhere—table of gold, seats of gold, cups of gold!

"On couch of gold was very old man, very like monkey, bald as egg. Two bald-heads on knees to him; hai—what faces! Had to go down on knees; old man he stared at me with eyes like burning coals. I shivered like jelly. 'You poison me!' he said. I swore by Siva I was innocent as new-born babe. I talked a lot, told him I was absolutely ignorant he was so old, too old to eat things that would make little sons of English sahibs sick. I said, if I had known, I would not have made things so bilious. 'Send for doctor,' he said. Another bald-head came, kicked me away, knelt in my place. I crawled away, calm in innocency of heart, and, while doctor did his job, I took squint round. Great snakes, sahib! At one end of room, in recess behind screen of gold wire, I saw gorgeous robe hanging on gold peg, and on small gold table most splendiferous head-dress. My stars! Old Chinky could give socks to American millionaire."

Slipping unseen round the plantation, the Scot met Hamid. "Well?" he asked eagerly.

"Did you see the Eye?" Jackson asked, eagerly.

"What eye, sahib? Old man's eyes enough for me. They lugged me back; down I drop again—his eyes made me frizzle. He said 'Go!' Nothing wrong with him but liver off colour. But, this morning, bald-head told me to carry in dish myself; in future I must taste in presence of old man. That is my rise, sahib."

"Eh, man, you're lucky," said Mackenzie. "But now, tell me. The grating in the passage—what is it like?"

"It is thin bars of gold, sahib."

"How far apart?"

"Width of two fingers, sahib."

"And how large is the hole?"

"As long as my outstretched arms, and a little wider than my spread fingers."

"Big enough to crawl through?"

"If you were flat as flounder, sahib!"

"Can you see to the bottom of the hole?"

"No, sahib; it is dark and goes deep."

"Next time you come, bring me a small marrow-bone, not wider than your two fingers. Fill it with dried marrow, closely pressed together. Can you get any paper?"

"There is rice paper in kitchen, sahib."

"Bring me a piece, and something I can write with—a blackened stick, or a bit of charcoal. You will remember?"

"Like a book, sahib."

"What do you mean to do?" Jackson asked, when Mackenzie had repeated what Hamid had told him, and the instructions he had given.

"Put a wee note inside the bone, and get Hamid to fling it down the grating."

"But if it falls into the wrong hands, and is taken to the Old Man? He speaks English; he may read it, too."

"What I write will only puzzle him."

"In any case, what's the good? Suppose Dick is there, how can he send an answer?"

"I've my notion about that, Bob. All depends on Hamid; but, as I said, he is no fool; he will do what we tell him, and I take every care. I wish it were to-morrow!"

"What puzzles me is the Eye. What on earth can it be?"

"That beats me. Clearly it is harmless at times. Hamid didn't notice it. I think it's a kind of box, containing some destructive substance in a concentrated form. The Old Man evidently has some device for opening it without harm to himself. One thing is very clear."

"What's that?"

"Och, man! That the old wretch must be very human after all, or he couldn't have the stomach ache."

CHAPTER XV

THE MOLES

"GIVE me my bone!"

Forrester puzzled over the words. They seemed merely absurd. What could their meaning be? It was a joy to know that Mackenzie or Jackson was above, and had discovered the place of imprisonment; but they must know little about it, after all, or they would be aware that it was impossible to send them an answer. Yet they must expect an answer; they would not have sent a message, mysterious as it was, unless they looked for at least an acknowledgment that it had been received. It occurred to him that the cleft might be used as a speaking tube; but a moment's consideration told him that it would be unwise to put this to the test. His voice might be heard by an enemy!

Beresford was so exhausted after the day's work that Forrester did not mention the strange discovery to him over night. But the next day was an off day for him, and in the afternoon, after he was somewhat restored by rest and food, Forrester showed him the bone and the paper. The effect was electric. A look of eager hope dawned in the tired eyes. A murmur of thankfulness broke from his lips, and he lay for awhile thinking.

"We have nothing we can write with," he said at length.

"Nothing at all. My pockets are empty," replied Forrester.

"Not even a pin?"

"No. Wait, though!" He felt along the edge of his waistcoat. "Yes, by Jove! I've one solitary pin. They would naturally overlook that."

"Prick the words through the paper."

"But what words?"

"Something that won't give anything away if the paper falls into the wrong hands. 'Give me my bone!' Answer: 'Take it!' Put the paper in the bone, fill up with dust, and replace it in the cleft when you get a chance. Leave the rest to our friends above."

The guard kept by the priest and the Negritos was little more than a form. The abject condition of the Chinese prisoners precluded any likelihood of revolt. Consequently, no real watch was kept at night, and the only risk was that an unusual sound might awaken one of the three somnolent figures at the entrance. Forrester was careful to move very quietly when he returned to the cleft that night though, after all, there was little chance of a slight sound reaching the priest's ears.

On reaching the cleft he looked in eagerly for the string which he half expected to find there. He was not disappointed. A few feet from the opening, but within easy reach, lay another bone, with a string attached. He replaced this by the bone containing the paper, and stole back to his friend. The second bone held no message.

"We shall hear from them again to-morrow," said Beresford, hopefully.

Next night, when Forrester visited the cleft, he found the bone on the end of the string, untied it, and hurried back with it to Beresford. Shaking out its contents, he found a somewhat larger screw of paper, enwrapping a sharpened stick of charcoal. On it, when opened out, he read:—

String 65′: hole 3′ × 10″: grated: where are you? Reply at once.

"He evidently thinks communication safe at night," said Beresford. "We can't tell him anything. Just write:—

"Cavern. Boring chimney through roof. More to-morrow."

Forrester wrote the message, adding "B. is here," replaced the paper, and, returning to the cleft, tied the bone again to the string. It occurred to him to give a slight tug. The string gave slightly, then stretched taut. It was evidently fastened to something above.

It was long before the Englishmen fell asleep that night. They discussed in whispers the information they had gained, and their future

course of action. They could not but conclude that the cleft, narrow as it was, was the avenue by which the Negrito had escaped; but what was possible to his diminutive frame was impossible to them. The grating had probably been placed over the hole after his escape was discovered, to prevent a second attempt. It was clear that the cleft was not perpendicular, or the little man could hardly have climbed up it. If they could ascertain the angle of its slope, they might calculate the vertical distance, and learn how long their chimney through the roof of the inner cavern must be made. They had no means of discovering this fact, which would have been so useful to them; but it seemed probable that, allowing for the steepest practicable slope, the chimney must be pierced for at least forty feet before it reached the surface.

By gradually lengthening the bamboo pole, and clearing the dust from the sides of the chimney, they had already extended the range of the rays nearly twenty feet above the roof, and more than thirty feet above the floor of the cavern. They had now no more bamboo rods; the pole could not be lengthened farther. It was impossible to remove the dust at a greater height without a ladder to stand on. But, with communications open, a ladder might no longer be an impossibility. With a knife and some stout string they might form one of bamboo, and still leave enough for a pole wherewith to continue their work of removing the dust. Forrester resolved to ask for these articles at the first opportunity.

Beresford pointed out the importance of letting Mackenzie know the spot at which the chimney, when completed, would reach the upper air. It might prove to be in the very quarters of the enemy. In that case the chances of escape would seem to be remote indeed. But Mackenzie was cautious as well as shrewd, and, with this necessary information in his possession, he would know how to direct his own course and what advice to give his friends below.

Accordingly, next day, Forrester carefully paced the distance between the cleft and the pit in the inner cavern. Allowing as accurately as he could for the windings of the passage, he gauged the length to be approximately fifty yards in a straight line. At night he found, on opening the paper secreted in the bone, that Mackenzie had anticipated him. He read:—

He crossed out the query and wrote "50yds.," adding, "Send knife and stout string." He returned to the cleft several times during the night, in the hope of finding the things asked for, but it was not until the next night that they came: a large kitchen knife, such as is used in boning meat, and about ten yards of thin hempen cord.

The work on the chimney had been, perforce, interrupted for several days, much to Beresford's benefit. The less prolonged exposure to the noxious atmosphere of the inner cave, and the new hope engendered in his heart by the knowledge that something was in progress above, effected a marked improvement in his physical and mental condition. His fear now was that he would be summoned again to the Old Man, and condemned without reprieve, before the chimney was complete. He resolved, if he were sent for, to persist in his refusal to translate the tablet, in the hope that the Old Man would spare him for yet further coercion.

Forrester set to work on the ladder as soon as possible after the knife came to hand. At night, in the passage, he cut short lengths of bamboo as rungs, and knotted them firmly to the two uprights with the cord. It was a crazy structure at the best, and he had a nervous dread lest, if he fell, he should break through or displace the slab over the pit, and be turned instantly to dust. But an experimental ascent against the wall of the cavern somewhat reassured him as to the ladder's stability, and, setting its top in the cavity above the pit, he mounted, and resumed the work of scouring the dust overhead.

From that moment they applied themselves to the task with unremitting energy. As soon as their fellow prisoners were torpid in the heavy sleep that was the only alleviation of their lot, the Englishmen stole from their place, and laboured until their endurance gave out. Forrester spared Beresford as much as possible, and often undertook the double work, alternately lifting the slab to release the rays and, when it was lowered, climbing to remove the dust. Each knew he carried his life in his hands, for the ladder could not be entirely hidden. If any priest should chance to visit by day the passage in which they laid it, he could not fail to observe it, and then their fate was sealed. But, judging by past experience, that risk was slight, and to disregard it was the only way to success.

Every now and then Forrester reported progress to his friend above. The length of the chimney increased about eighteen inches a day on the average; if, as they had calculated, there remained twenty feet of rock to pierce

before they constructed the ladder, in a fortnight they should arrive at or very near the surface. Meanwhile they received no news of what was happening above ground. Mackenzie did not reveal his plans; perhaps, they thought, he had formed none, but was biding his time until the chimney was nearly completed. His messages were brief words of encouragement, assurances that all was well, and the news that he was in touch daily with Jackson.

Rather more than a week after the first use of the ladder, Forrester made the alarming discovery that he could no longer reach the top of the cavity with the outstretched pole. This threatened the stoppage of the work, for neither pole nor ladder could be lengthened. He did not mention the matter to Beresford, who by this time had ceased to work on the chimney. When he had transmuted the due number of plates, he was too fatigued to endure the strain any longer, and Forrester persuaded him that he must conserve his strength for what might ensue when the chimney was completely pierced. Anything that might throw him back was to be avoided.

Forrester puzzled over the baffling problem that now confronted him. Time and again he stood looking up into the cavity, trying to conceive of a means by which the top might be reached. It was two days before he hit upon a possible solution. If he could cut notches in the walls of the chimney, and insert in them crossbars of bamboo, he would be able to raise himself successively to heights from which the rock above would be within reach of the pole. To obtain material for the crossbars he would have to shorten the pole; the difficulty was the notches—how could they be cut with no tool but a knife? Standing on the ladder, he tried the point of the blade on the rock, and found that this, while not very hard, was not friable enough to be excavated by so pliant a tool.

His thoughts turned at once to Mackenzie; perhaps he could find a more serviceable instrument. That night he placed in the bone the following note:—

Work stopped; send a chisel.

Next night he found in the bottom of the cleft not a chisel but a bar of iron, slightly pointed at one end. Accompanying it was a note:—

Hope this will serve. Let me know when near surface.

This implement he found to answer his purpose sufficiently well. From his perch on the top rung of the ladder he worked out two holes in the rock on opposite sides of the chimney; then with the knife he cut the proper length of bamboo, and thus fashioned a crossbar on which he could stand to repeat the same operation higher up. In this way he made a series of steps enabling him to brush the dust, as before, from the top of the cavity after each employment of the rays. Only then did he acquaint Beresford with the difficulty and the manner in which it had been overcome.

The progress of the work was necessarily slower now. The crossbars had to be removed after each ascent; otherwise, at the next opening of the pit, they would have been instantly destroyed. But the piercing went on steadily, and Forrester felt sure that, unless his calculations were very much out, his pole would, in a few more days, penetrate the roof of the chimney, and emerge through a hole in the floor of whatever room was immediately above him.

"Be very cautious," Beresford urged, when he heard this good news. "To break through prematurely might be fatal to us all. Tell Mackenzie how things are, and ask for instructions."

"Yes; we shall have done our part. The rest will lie with him. I wonder what old Mac has been doing all this time!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE HOLE IN THE WALL

MACKENZIE, meanwhile, had been playing a very busy, and at the same time a very discreet, part above ground, with timorous but effective assistance from Hamid Gul. It was the latter who, at night, when all was quiet, stole from the kitchen into the passage, and tied the string to a bar of the golden grating so cleverly that only the closest scrutiny could have detected it. Having discovered by means of this device the whereabouts of Forrester, and the burrowing in which he and Beresford were engaged, Mackenzie, in his calm, sagacious way, set himself to think out a plan for turning that work to account.

At first he decided to employ Hamid Gul only as postman; it was of vital importance that the Old Man should entertain no suspicion of his cook. There seemed little risk of Hamid's night work at the grating being detected; an Indian servant moves more silently than a cat. On the other hand, if he pried and prowled in the pagoda or its precincts, for the purpose of discovering the means of access to the rift, or

the other particulars about which Mackenzie was curious, he would almost certainly attract the notice of the Chinese, and ruin everything. For the same reason, Mackenzie took care that his necessary meetings with Hamid should take place at different times of the day, at different spots, and in the utmost secrecy.

His own actions were dictated by shrewd policy. To begin with, he told Jackson no more, not that he distrusted him, but that he feared the possibility of his disclosing something if for any reason the priests should again practise their hypnotic powers on him. Then, he assumed in public the mien of a slave, utterly cowed, bereft of will power, who lived only to get through his appointed task, and had no other aim than to merit his masters' approval. So well did he act his part that, after a few days' observation, the priests concluded that their taming process had been thoroughly effective, and paid no more attention to him than to any other of the men who toiled and sighed on the plateau. That the dejection which Mackenzie feigned was in Jackson's case real confirmed them in their delusion. Sher Jang, meanwhile, went about his tasks with philosophic submissiveness; but in his heart of hearts he believed that the sahibs, whose movements he watched unobtrusively, would some day get the better of the Chinese dogs, and he was ready instantly to obey the call which he felt would surely come.

When Mackenzie was satisfied that he was accounted well broken in, he took to roaming at night about the precincts of the pagoda. He had already settled in his mind that the way to the rift could lie only through the pagoda or one of the neighbouring buildings, and his chief aim must be to discover that. It was also of vital importance to find as nearly as possible the spot where the chimney-shaft would cut through the earth; one step towards that discovery was the knowledge that its base was fifty yards from the cleft, and therefore presumably from the grating in the passage. He had been much puzzled by the almost incessant knocking that proceeded in daytime from the low building behind the orchard, but dismissed that matter as of no account so far as he and his friends were concerned.

The wall enclosing the pagoda and its appurtenances was twelve feet in height—too high to look over, too smooth to scale. The gate by which Hamid issued to the fields was unlocked for him by a priest, and locked after him. Mackenzie meant to get inside the wall. It would not be difficult, perhaps, to make a ladder; but, before taking this in hand, he might as well see if there were a less ostentatious mode of entry.

Strolling at the rear of the orchard late one dark night, he was guided by the sound of running water to the stream which he and Forrester had observed on their first day upon the plateau. He followed the course of this, and discovered that it entered the enclosure on the north side by a culvert beneath the wall.

The darkness rendered it impossible to measure with the eye the width and the depth of the arch; but, on stooping and feeling along the stonework, he found that the stream poured through an iron grating. Since the water was perfectly clear, the grating must have been designed not as a strainer but as a defence against intrusion. The Old Man was obviously a stickler for privacy.

Mackenzie pushed and shook the grating, to ascertain whether it was firmly fixed. It held fast, but, slipping his hand under the water, he discovered that the submerged part was worn thin with long corrosion, and that there were several gaps in it where the iron had been completely rusted away. With a little exertion, he managed to break off a considerable portion of the grating below water, leaving a space large enough for a man to crawl through. It occurred to him at once that this was a safer means of getting inside than by a ladder, which would always make him a conspicuous object to anyone who chanced to be looking that way from the buildings.

There was no time like the present. Without removing his clothes, Mackenzie slipped into the stream, spread himself flat, and, taking a long breath, wriggled under water through the arch. When he stood up, he found that the top of the grating was considerably higher than his head, but that his head was higher than the earthen embankment of the stream on either side. The depth of the water was no more than three feet; but the embankments were no doubt intended to protect the buildings from flood in those seasons when the stream, swollen by the melting snow on the mountains, became a torrent. Standing in the running water, he peered over the embankment on his right. The pagoda loomed up black against the sky, some distance away. Between it and him were much lower buildings. No light was to be seen; all was quiet. He would have liked to push his exploration farther, but felt that, in his ignorance of the place, the risk of mistake and detection was too great. Hamid's

co-operation would be necessary if he were to profit by his secret entrance, and he resolved to come to an arrangement with the cook for the following night.

Returning to his hut by the same route, he stripped off his drenched clothes, spread them out on the ground at the back, out of sight, to dry, rolled himself in his blanket, and was soon asleep.

"How far are your quarters from the wall?" he asked Hamid next day, meeting him among the raspberry canes.

"Thirty good paces, sahib," replied the man.

"I wish you to meet me to-night at the wall, where the stream flows under. Have you a clock?"

"An hour-glass, sahib."

"Then let the time be two hours after lock-up. And bring a blanket with you."

"I am your servant, sahib; but if I may humbly ask——"

"Ask nothing. You can get out quietly?"

"Truly, sahib. But if bald-head nabbed me——"

"Hech! Are you afraid? Have you ever seen any of them about after nightfall?"

"Answer to both questions in negative, sahib."

"Where do they sleep?"

"Other side of Old Man's house, sahib; also across garden on left."

"Very well, then. You can slip out of your quarters at any time—that's so?"

"Quite OK, sahib."

"Very well. Be at yon arch two hours after lock-up, with a dark blanket, you mind."

"I am your servant, sahib."

But Hamid asked himself, with much trouble of mind, what notion the Mac sahib had in his noddle.

Jackson's curiosity had been awakened by Mackenzie's prolonged absence on the previous night.

"Where are you off to, Mac?" he asked, seeing his companion prepare to go out again into the dark.

"I'll bide a wee before I answer you, Bob. You can't help, and if I come a mucker the less you know about it the better."

On reaching the culvert he slipped off all his clothes, and laid them under a bush. Too many wettings, he thought, would so alter their appearance as to draw the attention of the priests. Naked, he slipped into the water, crawled through the arch, and, on lifting himself slightly, saw Hamid crouching beneath the shelter of the embankment. He quitted the stream, flung about him the dark-blue blanket which the Bengali had brought, and, putting his finger to his lips, motioned to Hamid to lead him along the watercourse.

Hamid was shivering with amazement and nervousness, but he obeyed in utter silence. They waded slowly through the stream, whose gurgling drowned the sound of their own movements. Presently they ducked to avoid a low bridge that led from one part of the grounds to the other. The dull thud of footsteps brought them to a sudden halt, and they crouched under the bridge, listening anxiously as the walker passed over their heads. They caught a glimmer of light, and, as the footsteps receded, Mackenzie peeped out, and saw a priest, swinging a small lantern, moving towards a building a good distance on their left. He entered it, and disappeared.

"Last man out!" whispered Hamid.

After waiting a few minutes, they continued their way along the stream. It flowed through a wide inner enclosure, in which were scattered a number of small structures like summer-houses. Two slight bridges spanned the stream, and here and there were irregular masses which in the darkness could not be clearly distinguished, but which appeared to be rockeries. Quaintly shaped bushes outlined their dark forms against the walls of the distant buildings. Mackenzie concluded that this was either the Old Man's private garden or the garden of the priests. Hamid could not tell him; he had been strictly forbidden to stray in this direction, or even to look over the low wall that surrounded the enclosure.

The watercourse was not straight. It turned now to the right, now to the left; its general course carried it obliquely across the garden, towards the angle of the wall. Thus the buildings on the right were not parallel with it. Mackenzie stopped to take his bearings. Hamid pointed out his own quarters, the kitchen adjoining, and the wall of the passage connecting with the dwelling of the Old Man. The pagoda reared itself high above the other buildings. Beyond it lay the barrack-like lodgings of the first order of priests; those of the second order were on the opposite side of the enclosure, and were approached by means of the bridges

"How far along the passage is the grating?" Mackenzie asked, in a whisper.

"About half-way, sahib."

"And on which side?"

"Side nearest to us, to be sure, sahib."

"Wait here for me, and hold this."

He placed in Hamid's hands the end of a

coil of string, climbed over the embankment, and made his way with stealthy speed towards the middle point of the passage wall, as nearly as he could judge it, paying out the string as he went. On reaching the wall he turned swiftly back, coiling the string round his finger. When he regained Hamid's side, he knew that the distance between the wall and this point of the embankment was a little more than sixty yards. The chimney which his friends were cutting would reach the surface somewhere on the circumference of a circle of which the middle of the wall was the centre, and which would come within about ten yards of his present position. He followed that imaginary line with his eye. It passed close to one of the summer-houses, ran across a bed of plants, then over the grass on which he had walked, touched the embankment some yards to the right, owing to the oblique course of this, and finally reached a point near the door of the cook's lean-to. To gauge the position of the chimney more precisely was impossible, because, though he knew that it was on the near side of the passage, he knew no more than that it was fifty yards from the grating.

Making a mental note of the course of the circumference on which lay the locus of the hole sometime to be pierced, he considered some few moments whether to steal towards the door of the pagoda, and try to discover whether it was guarded. But by this time he was shivering with cold. His reconnaissance had not been unfruitful, and he decided to return at once to his hut. He parted from Hamid at the culvert, handed him the blanket, again entered his cold bath, and, picking up his clothes, ran lightly over the ground to his lodging. Only on these two night expeditions had he taken off his clothes since his departure from the village in the forest

Next morning, Hamid handed him a note which he had drawn up in the bone. It was the longest he had yet received. Forrester had grown bolder—more reckless, perhaps—with the lapse of time. It read :—

Always light below. Can't tell when it becomes dark outside. Give us a sign.

" Things are moving," he thought. " They are afraid of cutting through in the daylight. How can I give them a sign? Hamid lets down the bone at all hours. Eh, well, I must think it out! "

A slight sound behind him caused Forrester to jump round with a sudden start. And there, peering up towards the hole in which the ladder rested, stood the priest.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MONSTER OF THE LAKE

AS Forrester mounted higher into the chimney he worked with ever-increasing caution. To allow the rays to break a passage through before everything was ready for joint action with his friends above would be disastrous. Another possible mischance was even more alarming. The ground might cave in by its own weight, or the weight

of somebody passing over it. The result might be to hurl him on to the frail screen below, and through it into the pit.

To guard against such accidents, he listened intently at each ascent, before he brushed away the protective dust. Once he thought he heard distant footfalls; another time the sound of running water. He wished that Mackenzie had been more communicative about what he was doing and what he had discovered; but reflected that, if his friend were silent, it was because, with Scotch canniness, he was determined to risk as little as possible for the sake of all.

He waited patiently for the sign by which he would know when darkness fell in the open. The bone, no doubt, could be dropped only at uncertain intervals, as opportunity offered. Even if he knew that it would be let down precisely at the hour of sunset, he could not be sure of being then on the watch at the cleft, for it was not his duty to enter the inner cavern at all; his secret work there had been done only when guards and prisoners were asleep, and that was probably much later than sunset.

One day, Beresford, just before he had finished his task at the pit, when Forrester was awaiting him in the outer cavern, noticed a trickle of water running from the inner passage towards him. While he was still looking at it in surprise, wondering where it came from, it was reinforced by a sudden swell, which carried the tiny stream across the floor of the cavern in a direct course for the open pit. By the time it reached the brink it had almost exhausted its energy, but some of it flowed slowly on, and poured over. Instantly there was a terrific explosion, like the bursting of an immense inflated bag, accompanied by a flash of white light which, for the moment, wholly conquered the green. Beresford was hurled against the wall of the cavern, and, when he picked himself up, he saw that the force of the concussion had shut the screen down upon the pit, gripping the gold chain to which was suspended the plate in process of transmutation.

It was all over in a moment; but Beresford had hardly recovered his senses when Forrester came hurrying into the cavern, through the cloud of dust which had followed the explosion, with Wing Wu and the priest in charge hard on his heels.

Forrester had just time to give a word of warning. When the priest arrived, Beresford had sufficient presence of mind to explain in Chinese that on drawing back the cover there had been a loud bang. He did not mention the stream of water; it had now ceased to flow, and though its appearance had amazed him, and in his half-dazed condition he attached no meaning to it, he felt instinctively that it had a meaning for himself and his fellow prisoners.

The Chinaman looked puzzled. The dust had set him coughing. He peered through it round the walls, remaining at a discreet distance from the pit, and thus failing to notice the dwindling trickle on the farther side. The atmosphere of the cavern, at all times unpleasant and oppressive, was stifling now. In a few moments, everybody was retreating along the passage to the outer cavern, Beresford remaining only to release the chain, draw up the plate, and lower the apparently uninjured screen firmly into its place.

"Are you hurt?" Forrester asked, anxiously.

"Slightly bruised, perhaps; nothing serious."

"What on earth caused the explosion?"

"A trickle of water into the pit. Where it came from——"

The Negritos were just bringing in the evening meal.

"That was the sign!" exclaimed Forrester aloud, knowing that the priest could not understand him. But Wing Wu understood.

"What sign, sir?" he asked, eagerly.

"Shall we tell him?" said Beresford.

Forrester hesitated for a moment.

"Not yet," he answered.

Wing Wu sighed, and turned away.

The priest at the entrance was joined by a second, drawn by the noise from the guard-room beyond the lake. They talked together for a few minutes, then the second man departed.

"He will tell the Old Man, no doubt," said Forrester to his companion.

"Yes, things are coming to a crisis. The water was our sign, no doubt; it could hardly have been accidental. Mackenzie must have thrown a bucketful or two through the grating. It is dark outside at about the time of our evening meal."

"Do you think the priests suspect us?"

"Who can say what goes on in their Chinese minds? The fellow didn't see the water, that is pretty certain. But I am troubled. In the chimney-shaft you heard running water above you, you said?"

"I am almost sure of it—perhaps the stream that runs across the plateau."

"If our shaft pierces its bed we are doomed. There is not the ghost of a chance for us. The explosion you heard will be as a pop-gun to a whole Dreadnought armament in comparison with the result if the cavern is flooded. I take it that the water which fell into the pit was

instantly decomposed by the rays. Only a little trickled over the brink; yet the explosion hurled me against the wall. If water passes down in any volume the whole place will be shattered, and we shall be cremated instantly in one enormous flame."

"Will you go up the shaft yourself, presently, and see if I was right?" asked Forrester, aghast at the thought of this cataclysm.

"I will try. Thanks to you, I am not nearly so much crocked as I was a few days ago. But we will wait a little longer than usual, to give the priest time to settle down if he is at all suspicious. You were quite right, by the way, not to let me explain to Wing Wu. He is so easily hypnotised that he would betray us at the first question. It will be time enough to tell him when our work is done."

Several hours later they stole into the inner cavern, and, when Forrester had placed the crossbars in position, Beresford mounted the ladder, and climbed into the chimney from bar to bar. He carried the piece of pointed iron, with which he carefully probed the roof. Withdrawing the implement, he passed his fingers along it from the pointed end downwards.

"We are very near the surface," he called down, softly. "You have destroyed all the rock. The iron has gone through two or three inches of clay, and then into loose earth. We can't risk employing the rays again. If the earth above collapsed in mass it would smash through the screen, and carry us with it into the pit. We must bore a hole gradually with the iron."

"What about the water?" Forrester asked.

Beresford listened intently, Forrester standing below with his hand on the ladder.

"Yes," said Beresford at length, "you are right. But it appears to be at one side, not directly overhead. Ah! There are footsteps. Listen!"

They kept absolute silence. Forrester looked up at his friend, dimly visible, high above him. His attention was so fully concentrated that a slight sound behind him caused him to jump round with a sudden start. And there, in the entrance to the cavern, he saw the priest, peering up towards the hole in which the ladder rested.

In after years Forrester often felt a quickening of the pulse as he tried to piece together the confused sequence of events in the next crowded minute. Whether he shouted to warn his companion before the Chinaman swung round and da hed back along the passage, or whether the Chinaman fled first and his cry followed, he could never distinctly recollect. All that he could remember was that, impelled by an instinctive feeling that the priest must be caught and silenced, he sprang like a tiger towards the intruder. Probably the fact was that the Chinaman, being on the alert, had already turned before Forrester dashed after him, for he had a lead of several yards up the passage.

Forrester was the younger and the fleeter of the two. Weeks of life in the mephitic atmosphere of the underworld had slackened his muscles and lowered his nervous energy; his wind came short; but at this perilous crisis he seemed to regain all the athletic vigour which had served him so well on the football field in years gone by. When the priest dashed into the outer cavern, Forrester was hard on his heels.

The former, feeling no doubt that he had now desperate men to deal with, rushed straight across to the entrance, where he might expect to find the Negrito guards ready to support him. The little men, however, startled out of their wits by a sight which they had never, in all their years of servitude, beheld before, stood like stockfish, gazing amazedly at the two figures swiftly approaching them. When he reached them, the Chinaman appeared to realise instantly that he could place no reliance on men so palsied. He darted between them, turned to the right, and ran as fast as his long robe would allow along the ledge leading to the ward-room on the other side of the lake.

Crossing the cavern Forrester had gained on him. At the entrance he was barely two yards behind. He flashed past the astounded Negritos, swung round on to the ledge, came up with his quarry just as he reached the plank bridge, and, making a spring forward, caught him round the waist, as he had tackled many a man in pursuit of the oval ball. The Chinaman, however, although less agile, was of heavier build, and, by sheer strength and weight, began to haul Forrester along the bridge towards the farther ledge, at the end of which his colleague and the Negrito guards were already massing.

Forrester clung to him desperately, tried to drag upon him by digging ineffectual heels into the plank; but, with the cavern wall on his right and only two feet of planking to manœuvre on, he found that, inch by inch, he was being pulled into the jaws of danger. The Chinaman was clutching at the crazy handrail for purchase in hauling his tenacious grappler along. In a few seconds, Forrester must either release him or fall a captive into remorseless hands. Despair struck a spark in his darkening

mind. There was one chance—one, and no more!

Bracing his right leg, he threw the whole weight of the Chinaman and himself against the balustrade. It creaked; there was the snap of breaking timber. Forrester released his man, and drew quickly back. The priest fell with a great splash into the green, oily waters of the lake.

By this time the startled company at the remote end of the ledge were beginning to advance. A spear whizzed past Forrester's ear. To protect himself he wrenched away a piece of the broken handrail. With this club he could ward off a missile, or crack a skull. Facing the enemy, he retreated with wary footsteps along the bridge. The priest, leading on his Negritos, came striding along the ledge, his parchmenty features grimacing with rage.

Forrester was trembling in every limb. The sudden spurt, the muscular strain, had told heavily upon his debilitated body. And again despair seized upon his soul as he realised that his efforts, after all, had been made in vain. Before long the priest now menacing him would hurry to acquaint the Old Man with the revolt of the prisoners. They would be taken aloft, and then—the Eye!

But all speculation was suddenly shocked out of his mind by a tragic sequel, unlooked-for, terrible.

The Chinaman was still floundering beneath the bridge.

Swift and silent, from out the sombre spaces of the lake, there slid a something huge and hideous—a shape. A glint of greenish light in cruel eyes; a flash of gleaming teeth in jaws like those of a mammoth dog-fish; a shriek of terror and despair—then silence, and a slow heaving of the waters. The monster had claimed his ancient right.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE YOUNG FAG

"Hallo, Edward, you look awfully energetic! I wish you'd run home and get my bathing things. And just see whether there's a letter for me, and bring along my camera. Oh! and I say—you might get me six-penn'orth of stamps, and then——"

"Well! I *do* like your cheek, Herbert! Why, if I were in your position I'd do it all myself."

"Well, what are you grumbling about? That's just what I'm asking you to do."

The O.T.C. at Marlborough College

By "Marlburian"

I

THE PAST

I AM informed that some short account of the early history of the corps is required. The most notable incident in it that I have been able to find—I was not there myself, needless to say—was the passing of a bullet through the marker's hat at the butts, somewhere in the 'sixties. This marker was a Waterloo veteran, Slade by name, and he used to declare that Waterloo had had no terrors for him like those of an afternoon's work at the butts, especially when a recruits' course was being fired. We have gone rather far since then.

As a matter of fact, the history of the corps is much the same as that of any other institution. It was founded in a wave of enthusiasm, in the earliest days of the volunteer movement, and struggled on against the usual obstacles, making the usual mistakes, and profiting by them. The first company was seventy strong, out of about six hundred in the school, and thirty years later the corps strength was still a bare two hundred. The chief obstacle with which it had to contend was apathy, and occasionally something more. It was a bad habit of those days to jeer at volunteers, dog-shooters, as they were called—it is said that we once really bagged a dog, as well as Slade's hat—and few if any of the leading boys of the school joined the corps. Another obstacle to success, which unfortunately—being geographical—still exists, was the musketry range. It lies in a long, sheltered valley, quite unexposed to unforeseen wind and light effects, making training too much like that of an indoor range. Consequently, when our men went to shoot at Wimbledon and Bisley, they were very severely handicapped. Thanks partly to this drawback, we have won the Ashburton Shield only once—in 1874. But we have been close to it often—second in 1868, 1884, and 1885, and fifth in 1888—only three points behind the winners. In 1905 we led at 200yds., but dropped to fourth over the longer-range score. We have also won the Spencer Cup twice (in 1875 and 1880), and in 1872 won the second prize offered that year. In 1885 and 1888 we won the cadets' trophy. On the whole, therefore, we did not do so badly.

One bad mistake—not perhaps altogether our fault—was in regular operation in those early days. The ordinary cadet did nothing but drill, and not very much of that, one parade a week when his recruit's course was over. The most he did with his rifle was to fire blank out of it on the occasional field days. Musketry, except for enrolled members, was entirely voluntary, and only a very small proportion of boys went through a course. But, considering the fearful kicking capacity of such rifles as the short Hay—our first weapon—the Snider, and even of the Martini, together with the small size of most of the cadets, this is hardly to be

wondered at. They were none of them weapons at all suitable for fourteen and fifteen year old boys, unless exceptionally well grown. But the fact remains that very few in the old days could shoot at all.

However, whatever mistakes we made, we avoided the worst of all—giving up. We stuck to our work and plugged along, doing all we could, going to field days, sending detachments to manœuvres, shooting against other schools—and often beating them. We were fortunate in having had the late Dean Bradley to give us a good send off, and in an unbroken succession of thoroughly keen and efficient C.O.'s—Mr. C. M. Bull, Mr. W. J. Ford, Mr. G. W. Rundall, and the Rev. W. H. Chappell among others, who brought us along through the critical years to what we may look upon now as an assured position of prosperity under Major A. H. Wall, as much as any institution can be said to be in such a happy condition.

II

THE PRESENT

We began with 70 cadets. In 1913 we had 570 out of 630 fellows in the school. This is a big jump, even for fifty years; but perhaps the most striking contrast with the past is afforded by the musketry of to-day, compared with that of earlier days. We are still handicapped by our range, as we have never been able to obtain a better one within practicable distance. We have neutralised that to some extent, as far as our marksmen are concerned, by out matches, and by occasional days' practice on other ranges. But it is not so much the individual marksmen who count in war as the shooting of the whole, and we devote ourselves to this end, perhaps even more than to the other. Marksmen will generally take care of themselves, while the ordinary boy shot needs to have every care taken of him.

He gets that care nowadays. Every boy on joining has to shoot a recruit's course, and afterwards goes through the regular annual course laid down by the War Office. The range is thoroughly up to date as regards targets, system of marking, etc., and there are now three targets as against two in the old days. These are hardly enough, and we could easily do with double the number.

In addition to the outdoor range, we have now the best of facilities for indoor practice. Thanks to the generosity of Mr. C. R. Gunner, we have a fully equipped, up-to-date Solano range, including a landscape target for training in fire control, and every cadet goes through a course there. I may mention that, thanks to the element of realism in this system, the Solano range is extremely popular, and the corps' keenness needs no stimulating to its use.

In the armoury, also, we have a fifteen-yards miniature range, at which practice is mostly voluntary, but this does not entail slackness nowadays. There are generally more candidates to shoot than there are targets and time for; but, generally speaking, fellows take it seriously, and do their best to get good patterns. As a result, comparing present conditions with those of the past in, so to say, mediæval times, we had, perhaps, fewer than a score of good shots, some of whom never came on ordinary parades at all, and two or three score of indifferent and medium shots. Nowadays we have between five and six hundred cadets, every one of whom can use a rifle with at least some effect and has got over being gun-shy, knows the elements of musketry and understands the meaning of practical fire-control in the field. Of these, from twenty to twenty-five per cent. are really useful shots. We hope to make this percentage higher yet; but, as things go, I think we have little to complain of.

To turn to drill, our system again is totally different from the old one of one battalion parade a week. For example, look at the parades for a particular Tuesday, taken at random from the Order Book:—

Certificate A Class. (Thirty or forty cadets.)
Recruit drill.
Musketry instruction class.
Junior company class.
The rest on battalion parade.

To begin with, this parade is for 12.15, which is in school hours, and practically the whole school attends. Civilians do something else, but what I do not know. They don't seem to know themselves. Probably they loaf in class-room.

To take the subjects in turn—except musketry, which I have already spoken of—Certificate A is a really stiff exam. in drill, tactics, musketry, etc. A fellow who passes it really has some solid knowledge of soldiering. It pays him, too, if he goes up for Sandhurst or Woolwich, as it counts two hundred marks. In the summer of 1913 we had twenty-five fellows with Certificate A, which is, I believe, a higher figure than any other school in the kingdom can boast of. This is one reason why we may say that the O.T.C. is our strong point. Recruit drill is a thorough course, which lasts some weeks. But when it is over a cadet does not at once

take his place in the ranks. For a year, at least, he remains in the junior company, and is trained quite apart from the rest of the battalion, till he is big enough and well trained enough to be an efficient cadet.

The old, once weekly, battalion parade of the whole corps occurs very rarely now. A great deal of work is done, but all by companies, under company officers. The companies, also, are strictly organised by houses. This has, naturally, the effect of making the rate of promotion uneven in different houses; but that can't be helped. The system is the best for efficiency, and the best men never fail to get to the top.

A very important feature of our system, one not very common in other schools, is that the company officers, who do all the training, are cadets, boys still in the school. There are, of course, master officers, but their duty is to supervise and advise. Naturally they have a good deal to do in the Michaelmas term, after the clean sweep at the end of the summer. But after that, when the new officers have learnt their work, they have little to do but look on.

The company officers not only know their work but take good care to see that their companies know it and do it too. The house company system enables them to do this with ease, and there is, besides the general principle of efficiency, a very good reason for this, in the house-drill squad competition, which is held every summer term, with a shield for a trophy. The squads are trained, as usual, entirely by cadet officers, who naturally do not allow their house to lose the trophy for lack of energy.

Officers of Marlborough College O.T.C. *Photo. E. H. Roberts.*

We have, of course, a band, drums and fifes, and a squad of signallers and scouts, all of whom have to pass a proper test. The uniform is khaki breeches and putties, with a dark green cap.

III

THE GENERAL OUTLOOK

I was asked to say how the corps has made such strides of late years, till it has become practically a whole school institution, and

how service in it is regarded by fellows at large.

I can't say I had ever thought very much about it before. It was there, the duty had to be done, and that seemed all there was to be said. But I suppose that the South African War, and, later, the list in chapel of O. M.'s who died there, had a good deal of unconscious effect in stimulating recruiting. There is little doubt, however, that the house-drill competition had as much as anything to do with the present state of efficiency. It had not long been instituted, before rivalry between houses became as keen at drill as at anything else. The bigger and more important fellows realised that amateur soldiering was not beneath their dignity, as it had been considered in earlier days. They joined, and, having done so, put their best into the job.

At this day, the senior prefect, who is also his house games captain, is cadet captain; and this not because he is head of the school but because he is the best man beyond cavil for the post. In practice, we find that the most influential and best fellows at games, and in the school generally, almost always rise to the top in the corps, if not as officers, as N.C.O.'s. But the exceptions do their duty, in lesser positions, just as keenly. For instance, the captain of the school fifteen plays the big drum in the band. I may also add that the Sixth Form have no school on Tuesdays at 12.15, but they parade as a matter of course like the rest of the school. Naturally, when new boys see the big fellows and seniors taking the corps thus seriously, it does not occur to them to do otherwise themselves. Further, keenness is kept up very largely by camps and field days with other schools—the competition element again. We do not want to think that any other school can give a better account of themselves than we can. Lastly, I am bound to mention two very good, live reasons for the present efficiency of the corps; our C.O., Major A. H. Wall, and Sergeant-Major Barnes. We have always been fortunate in our C.O.'s and sergeant-majors, and to-day our luck is as good as ever. Thus the corps flourishes, and its efficiency and numbers keep up to standard.

As to how it is regarded by fellows, I suppose that nine out of ten, especially among the juniors, would say it was a bore. But, as to that, I believe that even in regular corps both officers and men say the same at times. It would be a mistake to say that the whole corps is consciously keen. The senior ranks are—they would not be officers and N.C.O.'s if they were not. But it would be contrary to human nature if the average rank and file were so, with their lack of responsibility, and with nothing but their rather monotonous routine duties to interest them. But there is enough genuine unconscious *esprit de corps*, or the O.T.C. would not be what it is. Fellows do their duty without thinking about it. Being, when they first came, a school institution, and no longer a side show for a few enthusiasts, they take it as a matter of course, as they do games and school work. In popular estimation, its position is midway between games and work; and though there is, in theory, no compulsion, in practice it is very nearly as unavoidable as they are.

Of course, a few fellows do not join. They are not exactly looked down upon, but they inevitably come in for a certain amount of chaff as mere civilians. On the other hand, no one in his senses would dare to make fun of the corps, even in a friendly way. Even the worst grumblers would turn on him if he did so, and teach him the error of his ways.

GRIMSTONE'S GATE

Telling of a Deep Scheme in which Crichton Takes a Part

:: By CAPTAIN G. A. HOPE ::

I

THE afternoon was scorchingly hot and the match was dull. It was the great match of the year—against Leckenham—but there was no saving grace even in that. Brent and Leeson, described as careful and painstaking bats in the school paper, were in, and were vindicating their titles. During the last hour they had put on precisely twenty-one runs, including five extras, and the school was showing open signs of boredom.

Crichton did not usually patronise cricket matches. Outside the football season his occupations were rifle-shooting and swimming. He had intended to spend that afternoon on the range, but had allowed his two friends, Palgrave and Mockler, to take him up to see the match, on the understanding that they provided a rug to sit on, and strawberries. As long as the strawberries lasted things had been bearable, but now they were done, and Crichton became fidgety.

"They talk a lot in the papers about how to brighten cricket," he said at last. "I can suggest one little plan for this place. Send Leeson and Brent to the lethal chamber."

"They're stopping in, anyhow," said Palgrave, "and tiring the Leckenham men, which is something."

"I suppose that's all right," said Crichton, "but they're also making me very tired, which is something I've no use for. Pally, I believe you're a prefect."

"Chucklehead," grunted Palgrave. "I suppose you can't help it."

"I can't. But you are a prefect, you know, and it's no good trying to hide the disgrace. So, being one, you will take Mocky and me down to bathe."

"Take yourselves," retorted Palgrave, who was very comfortable where he was.

"We mustn't; and, being good little boys, we won't. But you will, or else—— Pally, remember our Mr. Lloyd?"

Palgrave laughed sleepily. Lloyd was an ill-advised youth who had pitted himself against Crichton, with the most disastrous results, as has been told before.

"*Pax*," he said, sitting up. "But you'll stand a brew afterwards."

"Let afterwards take care of itself. Now is the acceptable time to do the young fur-seal act. Come along; the bathing-place won't be very full."

Being early in the afternoon, the bathing-place was given up to the swimming pupils. Ordinarily about half the number of these should have been loafing about in the deep end, like a school of small whales. But when the three friends came into view of the water they heard a terrific hubbub, and saw a horde of small boys running along the far bank. Every now and then one would dash into the water, as if to seize something, and occasionally the whole crowd stood still and looked hard at the water. Then someone would yell and point, and the gang started off again.

"Clean dotty," remarked Mockler, and then, as if having left nothing more to be said, he sat down and began to undress.

"It certainly looks as if the sun had been too much for them," remarked Crichton.

"What's up, you loonies?" he shouted during one of the intervals.

"It's a bird," squeaked a small boy. "It keeps swimming up and down, and diving. We're trying to catch it."

"By Jove! It must be a dabchick!" said Crichton. "There are plenty in the river outside. But I wonder how it got in."

"Flew over, I suppose," said Palgrave, at which Mockler laughed scornfully.

"Well, why shouldn't it?" said Palgrave. "How else could it have got in here?"

"Dunno," said Mockler from inside his shirt. "But dabchicks don't, as a rule."

"He means don't fly," said Crichton. "But,

all the same, I wonder how it got in. Hullo, there it is!" he exclaimed. "Quiet, you idiots! Leave it alone."

A man wearing a Fifteen cap is listened to, even when that is the whole of his costume, and the small boys froze. The unlucky intruder was now in the deep end, and swam about aimlessly, as if the silence bewildered him as much as the noise had done.

"What are you going to do?" said Palgrave to Crichton.

"Make the kids line up and drive it without any fuss to the shallow end, and catch it there if I can," he replied, and he shouted his plan to the small boys, who at once lined up, those of them who could swim, and got ready for the drive. Just as they were ready the bird dived again.

"And the rest of you keep out of the way, and try not to yowl," Crichton added. "As soon as it comes up again, start swimming."

The crowd waited in silence, but the dabchick did not appear.

"What's the dabchick record for diving, Mocky?" said Crichton at length.

"Dunno. Minute or so, I dare say."

"Then this one is the champion, for it's been down a good deal more than that; or else it must have found the way out again."

They waited a few minutes longer, but there was no sign of the dabchick, and gradually the swimming pupils returned to their usual occupations. Those who could not swim returned to the shallow end and the belt, and did their best to strike out "'igher and wider," and in the intervals ragged and ducked each other in the shallow water. The remainder paddled out into the deep, and loafed about on the sunlit water like a school of small, pink whales, where Crichton and his friends joined them.

"I never," said Crichton, "could see the fun of taking a succession of headers as some loonies do. This is much more pleasant. Palgrave, aren't you glad we lugged you away from the Eleven?"

"This is all right," said Palgrave, lazily. "I wonder if——"

Just then a small boy, swimming hard and not looking where he was going to, ran into him and ducked him.

"Where the dickens do you think you're going to?" spluttered Palgrave, as he came up, preparing to hit out. But his aggressor was out of reach, and looking round he noticed a general exodus in progress. For a moment he thought that Crichton had started on the warpath; but he saw his friend's copper-coloured head just above the water close to him.

"What's up?" he said. "Have you been——?"

"Nope," said Crichton, jerking his head towards the bank beyond the deep end. "I've an idea it's *those* beggars."

Palgrave looked and saw four big boys undressing under the trees.

"They're Fryer, Lander, Gwyn, and Paul," he said. "Those four rotters in Millhouse who are always playing the ass. But what are they doing here now? I'll bet they haven't got leave."

"But they have swimming lessons, same as I had up to last year," said Crichton. "The dear old professor would give them leave like a shot."

"Anyhow," he went on, "don't go on the warpath. I want to see what they're up to. Let's go ashore."

They did so, and lay down on the grass in the sun. But at first there seemed no justification for the panic caused by the appearance of the new comers. They behaved in the most unimpeachable manner, diving in off platforms and spring-boards, and ragging each other without paying any attention to the small fry. These latter watched them apprehensively for a minute or two, and then, seeing that no attack was imminent, they slipped back into the water and began to loaf about as before, but nearer the shallow end.

"Look here!" growled Palgrave at last. "This is piffle! What on earth do you think those four rotters are going to do?"

"Pally," replied Crichton, "you may be a prefect, but you're a chucklehead, just the same as ever. You don't know those four rotters; I do. They're going to jape with the kids, and I'm going to jape with them. There they go, I thought so."

The four big fellows were notoriously the worst bullies in coll., and were the terror of the small men in their own house. It had occurred to them that there might be some amusement to be extracted from the swimming pupils, and so they had cajoled their housemaster into giving them permits, as Crichton had guessed, though all four were good swimmers.

While Palgrave had been grumbling they had all four dived, on Paul's suggestion, to see who could stay under longest. There had been a short silence, and then panic broke out among the swimming pupils. The four big chaps had swum under water into the middle of the small boys and started ducking them right and left.

The swimming pupils scattered and made for the bank in every direction, two or three—including one small youth with very black hair—heading boldly away for the deep water. But the Millhouse quartette knew their work, and were at the banks before most of the small boys arrived. Then followed a most enjoyable exercise. As a small boy arrived in the shallows he was seized and hurled back. Of course, several dodged the persecutors and reached safety, but there remained a dozen or so who could not escape and remained in the water. The four were about to go in after them—they were enjoying themselves thoroughly—when Gwyn noticed the fugitives in the deep end.

With a joyous whoop the Millhouse lot raced along the bank till they were close to the fugitives, and then flung themselves in, on which the black-haired boy promptly dived like a hunted otter.

"This is where we get busy," said Crichton. "Come along, you two, and back me up. I say, that black-haired child will rival even me one day. Who is he?"

"Grimstone, of Longmead," said Palgrave. "All right; go ahead."

Lander, Gwyn, Fryer, and Paul were in the seventh heaven. Grimstone had escaped, but they had surrounded three others, who were giving them the best sport imaginable, and they never saw vengeance, copper-headed and swift as a seal, coming silently towards them under water. Then suddenly the bright-coloured head rose behind Lander, and Lander disappeared. Fryer saw Crichton and tried to dodge him, without any success. Gwyn and Paul saw him also and went for him. However, by that time Palgrave and Mockler—neither of them mean swimmers—had arrived, which equalised matters.

Panic broke out among the juniors as the four big fellows started ducking them right and left.

"Who-oop!" cried Crichton, treading water. "Bet you ices all round we duck every one of you four chaps before you duck us. Here goes."

He disappeared, and a moment later Paul

was pulled down. A lively two or three minutes followed, which ended in the four from Millhouse taking refuge, waterlogged and panting, in the shallows. Codfish would stand a better chance with seals than did any ordinary swimmer with Crichton. Meanwhile, as Crichton had intended, the persecuted small boys had escaped.

"You're no good," he said, laughing. "Come back. You're four to three. You won't? Well, try and get me alone."

"I'd as soon try and catch a crocodile," said Fryer.

"Then you stand ices," said Crichton. "Come on, we've all had enough of it. Get dressed everyone, and we'll go down to Telson's."

II

The first episode ended quite amicably in ices and good fellowship, and the swimming pupils finished their afternoon's amusement in peace. But, unfortunately for themselves, Lander, Gwyn, Fryer, and Paul were incapable of taking a hint. They could judge others only from themselves. They knew Crichton merely as a rather mischievous individual, with a taste for ingenious, practical jokes. They themselves, when they played a practical joke, did so solely to cause hurt. It never entered, and could not enter, their minds that it was possible to have also some further, and possibly blameless, motive for the joke, and so they never dreamt that Crichton's onslaught had been a hint to them to leave the kids alone.

Next day, and every day when they could get away from games, they attended swimming lessons, and completely spoilt the enjoyment of the luckless small boys. Crichton attended also, as often as he could get leave, and occasionally took a hand in the game as before. But he also spent a good deal of his time trying to break his own record for staying under water. Indeed, except for visits to the surface for breath, he did most of his swimming well under water, often indeed so far down as to be out of sight from the surface.

Grimstone alone among the swimming pupils was not greatly put out by the persecution. As Crichton had noticed, he was thoroughly at home in the water—a great deal too much so to be on the lessons list—and he openly defied the persecutors, in actions if not in words. When the other small boys fled to the banks or shallows, he went openly to the deep water, and when the Millhouse quartette went for him he dived and generally escaped them. In fact, "ducking" Grimstone meant a regular sporting water hunt, and if Gwyn, Fryer, Lander, and Paul had had a farthing's worth of sportsmanlike feeling between them, they would have recognised the fact, and treated Grimstone accordingly. But the Millhouse tyrants had their own ideas on the subject. Sport for them meant making small boys miserable, and they took special measures to make Grimstone so. All of this was noted by someone, whom they had not wits enough to fear, and who made up his mind that they must learn to go softly in his presence, as others had done.

The Millhouse quartette, because Grimstone was one too many for them in the water, decided that he was a cheeky little brute, and that they would jolly well teach him. The method they employed did credit to their powers of invention, if not to their morals. They gave up the useless task of trying to catch him in the water; but one afternoon, when the small boy had had enough even for him, they met him at the side, and when he tried to come out they hurled him back.

Twice, three times, he tried to land, to be thrown back each time. So giving up the attempt on that side he swam across. But the pool was wide, and on reaching the other bank he found Lander and Paul waiting for him. After that every landing was closed to him, and he was beginning to get tired when Crichton interfered, after his own eccentric fashion. He had been watching in deep disgust while he undressed, but as soon as he was stripped he joined Fryer and Gwyn with a joyous whoop.

"Say, this is great!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "I'm on in this act, too, you chaps."

Fryer and Gwyn looked doubtfully at him; you never quite knew how to take Crichton. But even they had a glimmer of right reason at times, and hardly thought that he was the sort of man likely to join in their pet form of sport. However, there he was, evidently intending to help. Then, while they were still doubtful, Grimstone panted up to the shore, and they turned to attend to him.

Crichton may have intended to help someone. But his methods did not commend themselves at all to Fryer and Gwyn. He rushed into action so vigorously that he sent Fryer, who was bending over the edge, face downwards into the water. The collision must have upset his balance, for he reeled for a moment on the stone margin and clutched at Gwyn, but too late to save himself. As Gwyn was expressing his opinion with some vigour, the pair of them toppled over, and vanished together. Lander and Paul,

in dismay, raced round the pool as fast as they could run. But their energy was fruitless. Before Gwyn and Fryer had come up and got into action again, and long before Lander and Paul could reach the spot, Grimstone was safely ashore. Worse still, Crichton was also ashore, with Grimstone, and was complimenting him on his skill in the water.

"You rotters!" he said, amiably, as Lander and Paul came up. "You'll never catch this kid if you live till Doomsday. You're quite right to have swimming lessons. You need them. You ought to be in the belt with old 'Igher and Wider.' Hullo!" he added, as Gwyn struggled ashore, full of wrath. "I say, I'm awfully sorry, Gwyn! I can't think how I did it. I must have slipped up on the wet stone. It was lucky you had not dressed."

All four wanted to say a great deal to Crichton. They quite understood now the meaning of his "help," and were furious at his interference. It was such an unheard-of breach of etiquette, too. A chap in the Fifteen actually intervening on behalf of a kid, who was being very properly taught not to be cheeky by four big men. It was really as if he had gone back on his own tribe and colour.

But his Fifteen cap, besides other less tangible considerations, made them feel that they had better hold their tongues, and they moved away, leaving Crichton to talk to Grimstone. What he said no one heard, and neither reported the conversation. But, once the small boy got over his awe of the great man, who was thus honouring him, he joined eagerly in the conversation, and was noticed to be looking very pleased with life, as he dressed, later on. It appeared, however, that the conversation had

Crichton rushed vigorously into action, and the two toppled over into the water.

to do with water-play, for on the next opportunity, Crichton and Grimstone met, as by appointment, on a wooden staging that was built out over the deepest part of the pool.

"Is this the place?" asked Grimstone.

"It is, my son," said Crichton. "Do you dare venture?"

"Don't know till I see it," replied the small boy.

"Well, now's the time. In we go, brother seal."

Their meeting naturally attracted some attention, and, for a few minutes, the other bathers watched the strangely assorted pair. But all they did was to practise tricks and dive; in fact, they spent so much of their time out of sight that at last the others forgot them, and turned to other more important matters. At last Crichton and Grimstone came ashore, the latter openly jubilant.

"Then you think you can?" queried Crichton.

"As if I jolly well couldn't," replied Grimstone. "It's as easy as shelling peas."

"Very well, make it so, on the next opportunity, when I am not on view here. Only, my human otter cub, I should rather suggest beans instead of peas, eh?"

The suggestion doubled Grimstone up with mirth, and when Crichton left him, to relieve his feelings, he went back into the water and deliberately ran the gauntlet of the Millhouse sportsmen; who were, as usual, enjoying themselves in their own way. He was almost disappointed when they made no move towards him.

"What jape are you up to?" said Palgrave, who had been watching also, by Crichton's command, at a distance. "Is it anything to do with those Millhouse rotters?"

"Jape? Oh, I see. Pally, how often must I remind you? I do not jape; I merely educate those whose training has been neglected."

"All right. You can't help it. Are you going to educate those rotters? Because, if so, you'd better hurry up or someone else will take a hand. Everyone's getting a bit fed up with them. Kids want sitting on, but those fellows half drown two or three every day."

"Pally, the gods of high Olympus help you or anyone else who brings vulgar official methods into action. My method is, It. When they've felt it they'll remember it all their lives, when three days' gates are long forgotten. Patience, Pally, the day of reckoning approaches!"

III

"Alas! regardless of their doom, the little victims play."

Thus Crichton to Palgrave from a hiding-place on the tall, conical mound, an early British monument, which overhung one side of the bathing-place. The little victims were Lander, Fryer, Gwyn, and Paul, who were in the highest of high feather. Grimstone had of late been most aggressively cheeky; but the constant presence of Crichton and his allies had made any really adequate measures impossible, or at least inadvisable. But to-day Crichton was not down, and when Grimstone started swimming round them and under them they went for him without mercy.

Their blood was up, and they even caught him once or twice in the water. Hitherto that had not been of very much use. After all, the sport of ducking loses much of its charm when the victim is on the point of diving on his own account. But to-day they were unexpectedly successful. Lander managed to catch Grimstone from behind, and climbing on to his shoulder, drove him down, and only parted company when forced to come up himself.

For some reason Grimstone's nerve seemed spoilt at last. When he came to the surface he gazed around, evidently badly scared, as he gasped for breath. Then seeing Paul close to him he set off with a startled yelp for the shore, splashing violently. All four set after him, and caught him in a few strokes, which was unusual, and should have excited their suspicions if they had stopped to think.

Grimstone received no sympathy, even from the Millhouse quartette's other victims. As he was caught and ducked again and again, the spectators laughed and cheered, and all of any size or standing said, "Serves the little beast right." Grimstone had, without concealment, deliberately defied and cheeked Gwyn, Lander, Fryer, and Paul for days, and was getting only what he deserved. These four might be rotters and bullies, but they were big men with caps, and Grimstone was a kid. The logic of the situation was unimpeachable.

But it is possible to have, and do, too much of a good thing, and this was exactly what happened now. In the fulness of their enjoyment it never occurred to the Millhouse four that they could go too far. Grimstone had made a feeble effort to catch hold of the built-out staging, but Fryer and Gwyn had pulled him back and savagely forced him down. Then all four drew back, waiting for him to reappear.

A minute passed, but the black head did not appear. The four heroes look at each other uneasily, and Gwyn went under the staging.

"I say, he's not there!" he said, in alarm.

Then the crowd suddenly realised that

Grimstone had never come up after his last ducking. It remembered having cheered and encouraged the show, and, feeling uncomfortable in the remembrance—to show that it had no sympathy with manslaughter—it turned on the four executioners. But these were all under water themselves by this time, diving frantically. In a few moments others joined them, and dived too. But no one found Grimstone. Then, at the psychological moment, a master appeared.

"Hullo! What's the matter?" he said.

For a moment no one spoke. Then Paul, white and trembling with misery, told him the bare facts of the case. But the master was no fool, and in a few minutes he knew all there was to know, and he acted promptly. Life-saving apparatus was sent for, and as soon as it arrived and was got into action, he turned upon the gallant four.

"As for you," he said, very quietly—they would have preferred it if he had been angry—"go up to the sick-house." He looked round and added, finding a prefect in the crowd: "Palgrave, take these four to the sick-house, and tell the dame they are to see no one till the Head has dealt with their case."

The four great men were removed under escort, and the search for Grimstone was renewed without success.

* * * * *

It was said that Mouser, the revered Head of the school, seldom or never executed judgment without a twinkle in his eye. He knew boys and liked them, and did not think very seriously of their misdeeds, even when they demanded punishment. But there was no sign of humour about him when Lander, Fryer, Gwyn, and Paul were brought before him that evening.

Three hours earlier they had been consorting on terms of equality with the highest, wearing their caps at the back of their heads, giving way to no one, and talking and laughing loudly in court without reproach. Small boys had shied from their approach, and looked after them with mingled awe and hate when they had passed. In short, they had been, unquestioned, important "big" men.

There was nothing big or important about them as they slunk into the Head's study. They had spent the most miserable three hours they had ever endured or were fated to endure. Gwyn had certainly shed tears, and the others had not been far off the same ignominy. They had no doubt whatever that Mouser's study was but the ante-room to a prison, and were almost surprised not to find a policeman waiting behind the Head's chair.

The Head observed that he had dealt with many kinds of crime, but had never supposed that he would be called upon to deal with manslaughter. He said a good deal more, and by the time he had finished, the education of the four was completed.

"However," concluded the Head, "there is one extenuating circumstance in this case."

The four looked up. They had not dared hope for any such thing.

"Yes, and that is that Grimstone—though no thanks to you—is alive."

"Alive, sir?"

All four heaved a sigh of relief, so fervent that even the sternness of Mouser's expression relaxed for a moment.

"Yes; he is alive. It appears that a water-gate, leading from the deep end, under the staging, to the river outside, has collapsed, leaving a free passage. He was carried through that. That being so, for your parents' sake and for the credit of the school, I will take no public action, but will hand you over to your house captain for punishment."

Millhouse captain was one Soutar, a dour just man, to be relied on to do his duty thoroughly. Mouser knew this, and had on more than one occasion handed delinquents over to him.

* * * * *

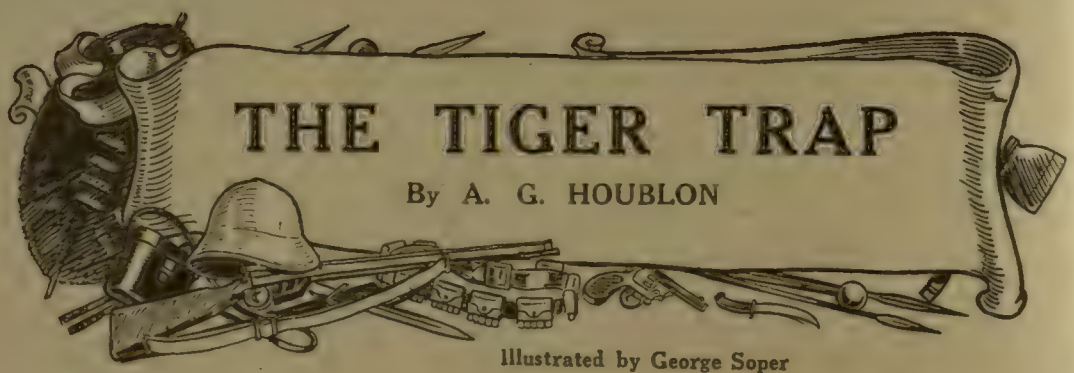
"Of course, it was a put-up job. The dab-chick made me think there must be an under-water way in; it couldn't have got in and then vanished otherwise. So I dived and found the jolly old gate at its last gasp. I finished it off, and found it quite easy to get out into the river that way. I meant to use it myself when I felt inclined, but when I made up my mind to educate those rotters I saw its possibilities, and I showed it to Grimstone. That kid is a genius. The way he played little Willie drowning was a masterpiece. He fooled those four to rights, and when the moment came he just went out through the gate."

"But he had to explain?" said Palgrave.

"He did. He declared he had looked upon the whole affair as a joke, and that he had gone through the gate just to rot them. And Mouser believed him, or pretended to, anyhow. However, as is usual when I take a hand, all ends happily. Lander, Fryer, Gwyn, and Paul have been educated, and won't do it again."

Which, as a matter of fact, they never did.

THE END



THE TIGER TRAP

By A. G. HOUBLON

Illustrated by George Soper

I

KESTON pulled up and put his head on one side to listen. He had been dozing as he rode, and had awakened with a start, fancying that he heard something familiar above the ceaseless voice of the forest. After a moment, he heard the sound again, and was sure. The sound meant trouble, and, closing his legs on his horse, he started again at a trot, to arrive in ten minutes at a group, consisting of two bullock carts, two or three native servants, and a native, obviously a sowar, a cavalry soldier, on horseback. The servants were sitting apathetically by the roadside, but the sowar was expressing his opinions with vigour to the bullock drivers, who looked frightened and sulky.

"Jafir Khan," said Keston, "do not these apes without tails know that transport is meant to move?"

The bullock carts, with his baggage for two months, had started well ahead that morning, and should have been by now almost at their destination. The sowar sat up to attention in his saddle.

"Sahib," he said, "it were well to report these pigfolk to the forest officer sahib, that their grazing rights be stopped for a year. They will not go on because a jungle fool has told them that there is a man-eating tiger in front, although I am with them with a rifle."

"Well it were if such worthless folk were eaten," said Keston. "Though the tiger needs to be hungry which would bare tooth for such garbage. Hearken, grandsons of apes. Go on you shall, for I must reach the forest officer sahib's bungalow by sundown. But for the sake of your worthless families, even I will ride with you to protect you."

"Heaven-born!" whined one of the drivers. "How shall even a sahib stop a tiger without gun?"

"Fools!" said Keston. "Jafir Khan has a gun and, being a soldier of the King, he can shoot. Also, I have this little gun." He tapped the butt of his revolver in an open holster. "Surely that is enough for a mangy old cat. Now forward."

Whining and grumbling, the men started again, and an hour later the bungalow appeared, perched on the next spur, a mile or so farther on. Keston, being devoted to sport and wise in his generation, made friends with the Forest Department. As a result, he was now going to spend his leave with Hepburn, an assistant-conservator, whose home was in the Central Indian Hills, two days' ride from the terminus of the mail-cart route, which was forty miles from the railway. No one ever went there except forest officers and their friends, and Hepburn said the forest was full of game which needed thinning. He had not the time to do it adequately himself, he said.

"Now I will ride on," said Keston. "You will be safe with Jafir Khan, and be sure, apefolk, that it is farther to go back than forward, and so all the more time for the tiger to catch you."

The argument impressed even low-caste bullock drivers, and they hurled insults at their cattle, and pulled their tails to make them go faster. Keston rode on, and in a quarter of an hour was at the gate of the compound which surrounded Hepburn's bungalow and office. He noticed that the place was singularly quiet. Not a soul was about, and the windows were all closed and shuttered, as if for the heat, though it was late in the afternoon, and the heat was at no time really severe enough for shuttering up a house in the hills, even in the hottest weather.

Keston concluded that Hepburn had been called away, and that his servants were idling in consequence, and he promised himself to

give them a surprise. But it was he himself who had the surprise; indeed, the surprise of his life. The way up led to the side of the bungalow, and as he turned the corner he understood why the place was so quiet. Sitting against the wall on the verandah was an enormous tiger.

As his horse stopped dead Keston's hand closed round the butt of his revolver, and then he sat still and gazed—his horse doing the same—at the beast, not five yards from him. The tiger turned his head, raised his lips, and snarled inaudibly, but also sat still, apparently looking past his visitor to the forest. But a very slight ripple under his loose skin showed

The sowar was vigorously addressing the bullock-drivers, who looked frightened and sulky.

that he, too, had got ready, without ostentation, for action. Keston saw that the tiger was ready to spring without further warning, and he felt glad that he had made a hobby of revolver shooting, and was as quick on the draw as a cowboy. He did not dare move for fear of exciting the brute, but he wondered if he would be quick enough to draw and shoot, to turn the tiger when he charged.

However, he was not put to the test. For a few moments the tiger could not make up his mind. Here was a well-fed horse and a man, exactly what he had been looking for. But the man was a sahib, and his experience told him that sahibs were not to be trifled with.

The brute went as only a big cat can go when he is in a hurry, but not more quickly than Keston pulled his weapon. But as the muzzle cleared the holster Keston saw the tiger was only running away, and, without firing, he watched him flash across the compound and disappear into the forest.

"See you later, you old villain!" said Keston. "You've no business to be man-killing yet. Jove! I wish I'd had a rifle."

Replacing his pistol, he turned to the house and called. No one answered, so he called again, adding that the tiger had run away. Then a shutter was opened a few inches and a fat face appeared, decorated with gold spectacles and surmounted by a gold-laced cap, well askew. Keston noticed with some surprise that the face looked more angry than afraid.

"Sah, has your honour exterminated Mister Stripes?" it inquired.

"He left just now in a hurry, if that's any comfort to you," said Keston. "But where is Hepburn Sahib, and who are you?"

The gold-capped man heaved a sigh of relief and put his headgear straight. Then he opened the shutters, revealing himself as a fat Bengali baboo, with his garments torn.

"Hepburn Sahib has reported departure, sah, on urgent Government business," said the baboo, salaaming. "I am Baboo Bishen Dass, head clerk to Assistant Conservator. Is your

honour Lieutenant Keston Sahib?" He produced a letter from some secret recess in his attire and looked at it. "No. 50, Deccan Lancers?" he added.

"That's me," said Keston, dismounting and giving his horse to a trembling native who now appeared. "Let's have it."

The letter ran:—

Dear Keston, awfully sorry, but I've had to go across to Meldana to meet the old man, and shall be away a week or more. Make yourself at home, and if you want anything, ask Bishen Dass, who is not at all a bad chap for a Bengali. By the way, I've laid on a man-eating tiger for you, which really is a tiger and not a panther, as is generally the case: the first for years in this province. He ought to keep you amused till I come back.

Keston's horse stopped dead, for on the verandah sat an enormous tiger.

"Thoughtful man," said Keston. "He even had the beast ready on approval. Well, Bishen Dass," he added, turning to the baboo, "Hepburn Sahib says you will look after me."

Bishen Dass salaamed so profoundly that his spectacles slipped down his nose.

"First of all, I want to know about this tiger."

"Sahib, I was dealing with department matters, when the bheesty ran in, saying tiger by well. From advice received I was intimated of man-eater, whose custom is to extricate victim from hut to eat at leisure. So I ordered all servants into the house and closed shutters."

"Didn't the beast try to get in?"

"Never urgently, sah. He merely took seat in verandah, and occasionally made perambulation, and we waited for advent of your honour, as per Hepburn Sahib's advice. But by your honour's favour, I will revenge on tiger," he added, in a sudden access of fat rage. "He make common folk laugh at me. I will catch him and shame him."

"You won't find that easy," said Keston, drily. "Better let me do it for you. But how did that happen?"

Before the baboo could reply, a woman, who had been standing near with a small child, suddenly lifted up her voice.

"Oh, Heaven-born," she squealed, "but for this man, and he a Bengali, I had been childless."

"How was that?" queried Keston.

"Oh, that was nothing!" said the baboo. "But the men laughed at me as I ran, and my clothes were caught in the door and torn. Foolish child strayed from mother and I had to carry it in, with Mr. Stripes looking on and running to catch me. But by favour of gods, he was so elongated from me, that I won race by short head. But I much wind puffed, and he tore my clothes caught in the door. Also the men laughed."

Keston's opinion of the baboo went up with a run.

"Then ask them why they didn't help," he said. "That was jolly plucky, Bishen Dass. I'll tell Hepburn Sahib. Now order someone to get me tea. Hallo!" he exclaimed, as he entered the room and saw a shot-gun and a box of cartridges.

"Bishen Dass, why on earth didn't you use that gun? At such a short range you could have killed him with it."

Bishen Dass looked at the gun and turned pale.

"Nay, nay, sahib," he said. "I much fearing guns. I tried one once, and it hit me

kicks in the eye." He looked at the gun again and shuddered. "I send servant to your honour."

"Rum beasts, baboos," said Keston to himself, as the fat man shuffled out. "He certainly saved that kid at the risk of his life, and he funks a gun. Well, I'm glad he does. I must have that brute to myself."

II

SOME time before dawn next morning Jafir Khan woke his master up with the news that a jungle man had come in, reporting that the tiger had killed a night watchman in a field three or four miles away. Keston did not like getting up in the dark more than anyone else, but he was out in a few minutes and questioning the messenger. The man had very little to tell, and seemed as much afraid of a sahib as of a tiger; but he was quite sure that the watchman had been killed, and he gave a vague idea of the way to the place.

"But by favour of gods," said the Baboo, "I won race by short head."

While Keston was interviewing the man the door of one of the huts opened, and Bishen Dass appeared, wearing his gold cap, but otherwise scantily attired, and holding his spectacles in one hand while he rubbed his eyes with the other.

"Aha," he said. "Mr. Stripes doing culpable homicide, sah?"

"Sounds like it," said Keston. "But I can't quite make out the name of the place."

Bishen Dass questioned the man and then turned to Keston.

"Boria," he said. "That quite contiguous, sah."

"So much the better," said Keston. "Well, tell him I'll be there at sunrise, and that I shall want beaters."

Keston, Jafir Khan, and Bishen Dass each in turn told the man what was wanted. He looked dazed, especially after Bishen Dass's exhortation, given in what purported to be his own language. But he said he understood, with which they had to be content.

"He'll probably make a muddle of it," said Keston, as the jungle man slouched away.

"These jungle fellows are not intellectual, sah," said Bishen Dass. "But I think he understands. I go to make toilet."

This seemed a good scheme, and Keston and his man retired for the same purpose. Neither of them took very long, but Bishen Dass was even quicker, for as Keston sat down to his *chota-hazri* in the verandah he saw the baboo, fully dressed, giving orders to a man who looked like a forest guard, who presently started off at a run. Then the baboo turned to the house, and seeing Keston he salaamed.

"Departmental business, sah," he said. "These fellows have no respect for office hours."

"I'd have told him to wait," said Keston, and wondered why the baboo had not done so. Then the baboo called, and a mail runner appeared, to whom he gave a letter and a small bag of money.

"More departmental business, baboo?" said Keston. "By Jove! you're a regular hustler."

"Needs must when the diabolical friend drives, sah," said the baboo with a smirk, and retired to his own quarters.

In twenty minutes Keston and Jafir Khan were on the road, and after half an hour's ride they reached Boria, which showed no signs of any preparations being made.

"I knew that chap would muddle it," said Keston. "Jafir Khan, hunt up the head-man."

After a short search a withered old grey-beard was produced, who said he was the head-man of Boria.

"Well," said Keston, "aren't you going to let me have any beaters?"

The old man salaamed to the ground.

"Every man in the village is at the Heaven-born's service," he said. "What will it please your lordship to hunt? There are deer beyond counting, and many pig, which do grievous

harm to our crops. I have even heard that a bear——"

Keston interrupted him with an impatient laugh.

"Nay, Patel-ji," he said. "The bear and deer must wait. This day I hunt a tiger, the man-eater."

The man looked blank.

"Tiger, sahib?" he said. "By your favour, there has been no tiger here this thirty days, since Ramsaram's buffalo calf was taken."

"Nonsense," said Keston. "Why, a field watchman was killed here only last night!"

"The Heaven-born is my father and mother, but no man has been slain here. Is that not so my brothers? Why should we lie to your lordship?"

The small crowd of hangers-on which had collected, chorused confirmation. Keston knew it was hopeless to ask more questions. Either he had been misinformed, or else, for purposes of their own, they had decided to conceal the presence of the tiger.

"Very well," he said. "I will hunt what there is. Collect coolies, to whom I will pay two annas each. Meanwhile, my orderly and I will look around."

They rode round the up-ended fields about the village, looking keenly for tracks in every impressionable piece of ground. They had nearly circled the place, when they came to a largish field with a damaged watchman's machan in the middle. It was useless to look for tracks in the field, for the village herds had been driven over it not long before. But the machan might possibly give a clue, and they examined it carefully.

"Call your trail, Jafir Khan," said Keston, joyfully, after a few minutes.

Jafir Khan smiled.

"Your honour knows it. What need?" he said. "A freshly broken machan, with blood-marks on the wood and below, where they could not drive the cattle. It is clear. They drove the herds over the field to hide the evil beast's trail. These hill pigs have lied, sahib. It were well if your honour talked to them."

Keston did so with vigour, and without any result. The broken machan? Yes, it should have been mended before, and Ramiah broke it this morning. The blood? Surely Ramiah cut himself sadly as he fell. Would the sahib, of his favour, see to his hurt?

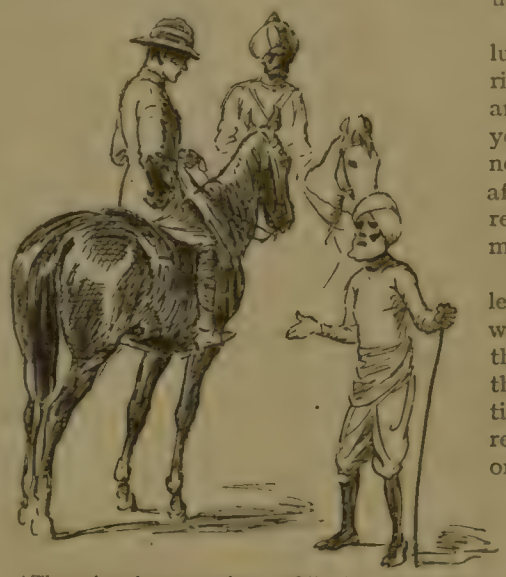
The sahib said he would not. He also said that the Patel-ji and his elders were a herd of lying apes; but that, as coolies were collected, he would hunt what there was, and he did so. The forest was certainly full of game, but even a really fine sambhur and a barking deer were no compensation for the disappointment. As soon as he had shot these two he stopped, much to the disappointment of the villagers, who had hoped for a large supply of meat. But Keston was in no mood to do favours, and at mid-day he rode home.

"Jafir Khan," he said, as soon as they were away from the village, "if we want to kill that tiger, we must find it ourselves."

"Without doubt, sahib," said the sowar. "It would seem that these ignorant folk have made him a god, as they would have done with those wolves we slew last year."

"And who went so near killing me," said Keston. "Well, we must go into the jungle ourselves."

"By your honour's favour, I had better go alone," said Jafir Khan. "I can alter my appearance, but your honour could not, and if these apes see a sahib our labour would be useless."



"There has been no tiger, sahib, for thirty days," said the man.

"That's true, worse luck," said Keston. "All right. I'll stay at home and shoot little deer while you make inquiries. There's nothing else for it, I'm afraid, till Hepburn Sahib returns. He may be able to make them speak."

But next morning another letter came from his host, with more regrets, saying that the "old man"—*i.e.*, the conservator—was trotting him off to the Kolgher reserve, which meant three or four days more away.

So Keston settled down to wait, and passed his time pleasantly enough, hunting in the forest about the

bungalow. Here he found Bishen Dass invaluable. The baboo might be afraid of guns himself, but he took care that Keston had plenty of use for his. In Hepburn's absence he appeared to be omnipotent, and he saw to it that his subordinates kept his guest advised of all the denizens of the forest, as he expressed himself.

For five days Keston heard nothing of Jafir Khan. Then early in the morning a jungle-man arrived with a note written in Hindustani.

By your honour's favour (the note ran, after the necessary compliments), have found the tiger and am watching him. He has not killed man since Boria, but this evening he has killed a sambhur, of which he has eaten little. Of your favour come quickly, sahib, and we shall slay him. The messenger will guide, and the distance is ten miles.

Keston started at once, and was on the spot by mid-day.

"Where is the tiger?" he asked.

"Sahib," said Jafir Khan, "even while your honour was riding out, this prince of evil beasts slew a girl, dragging her from a hut at the edge of the village. I know where he is lying up."

"Did you give orders for beaters?"

"I did not, sahib. None here know why I am here. I thought it best to give these apes no time to chatter. They will have no time to invent lies, if your honour comes on them suddenly."

But there Jafir Khan was wrong. To Keston's wrath, the villagers professed to know nothing whatever about any tiger. They were ready, as before, to assist the sahib in any way; Hepburn Sahib's baboo had given the order, but there was no tiger, and no one had been slain.

"But I saw the blood and marks," exclaimed Jafir Khan, adding a few opinions as to the character and antecedents of the villagers, "and it was from that hut that the girl was taken."

The head-man shook his head.

It was a packing-case, and by the light of the match Keston read the label.

"Gopal lives there, with his wife. Ask them," he said. "They have no child."

Keston went to the hut and found a stolid-looking couple, who, from the little they said, might not have known even what a tiger was. Moreover, there was no sign of the murdered girl nor blood trail. But, as before, every hoof in the village seemed to have passed round the hut not long before.

Keston turned to Jafir Khan.

"You say you know where the tiger is?" he said in English, which the man just understood. Jafir Khan then made a sign of assent.

"Then we beat there. Say I wish to hunt deer."

This plan was carried out, after a good deal of delay. The villagers, one and all, seemed afraid of that particular tract of jungle, and said there were no deer there. This proved to be correct. All Keston saw was a huge old boar at which he did not shoot, large enough and strong enough to be respected even by a tiger, and several jackals. The tiger was not there either.

Night was falling as they started to ride home, but after going a couple of miles Jafir Khan approached his master.

"Sahib," he said, "with your permission I return to that village."

"What's the good?" said Keston. "We shan't do anything till Hepburn Sahib is here."

"By your favour, we will. Let your syce take my horse, and I will return on foot and see what is to be seen. These low-born rats have shamed me, have made it seem as if I lied——"

"But I know that you did not."

"Your honour is my father and mother. Nevertheless, I must teach those hill apes that it is ill jesting with an officer, and a sowar of the King."

Keston felt very much the same. It was clear that there was some trickery afoot, though why those whom the tiger most oppressed should shield him passed his comprehension. He meant to get to the bottom

of the affair, and he knew that Jafir Khan would do so, if it was to be sounded, so he let him go, and rode on alone.

He arrived late and went in by the office verandah. It was not lighted, and on the way he kicked something hard and heavy. Lighting a match, he found it was a packing-case, the label showing that it had come from the stationery department of a large general store in Bombay, and that it was addressed to "Mr. Bishen Dass."

"Now what the dickens is the baboo buying from Traughter's by the boxful?" said Keston, testily, for he had hurt his shin. "And why must he leave the thing bang in the way? Bishen Dass and his beastly box are a nuisance!" and, feeling better, he went to bed. Next morning, as he strolled out, he saw Bishen Dass in the act of replacing the cover of the packing-case.

"Good morning, sah," he said. "Did your honour spiflicate Mr. Stripes?"

Keston's answer, which dealt with the intelligence and general character of hill villagers, need not be recorded. It was too long, for one reason.

"Your honour is not the lucky dog," said the baboo, judicially. "From advice received"—he loved that phrase—"it appears that ignorant men think the tiger a sacred ghost. Is your honour quite sure it was there?"

"That I jolly well am! And as to sacred

The tiger lay outside the door with his nose on the sill.

ghosts—rats! Do ghosts eat? Ours in England don't."

"Hindu ghosts all different," said Bishen Dass. "They all eat."

"Well, I wish you'd let the fools know that if they play any more monkey tricks I'll turn Hepburn Sahib loose on them. The tiger's simply murdering right and left, and they won't lift a finger to help me kill him."

"I certainly will, sah. But they, ignorant fools, no education, much superstition. Your honour will kindly excuse them. And, sah, one jungle man reports arrival of big bear close at hand. I have made all arrangements for good beat. It will serve to pass time while I discuss question with foolish villagers."

"Good for you, baboo," said Keston, more cheerfully. "I'm much obliged to you."

The beat was well arranged, and Keston shot the bear. When he came back the baboo was out, but that did not worry him, and he slept through the afternoon, till his servant brought his tea. As he went out later he saw Jafir Khan coming into the compound, tired and dusty, but jubilant.

"Sahib," he said, "is the baboo in?"

"No, he's been out all day. Why?"

"By your favour, I saw him some few kos from here this morning. But will your honour speak here, away from the house? Walls have ears."

Keston complied, and, after a glance round, Jafir Khan said:—

"Sahib, there was a funeral at that village last night."

"The girl?"

"Even so. The villagers beat him from her, and later, before we had the beat, men went and drove him away with buffaloes."

"But why are they such mud-heads? Do they want to be all killed?"

"They have no choice, sahib," said Jafir Khan, smiling. "But listen."

He spoke eagerly in a low voice for a few minutes, at the end of which Keston roared with laughter.

"Oh, he's great!" he said, delightedly. "But we'll do him yet. However, must I still sit here and shoot little deer, Jafir Khan?"

"Better so, sahib," said Jafir Khan. "Then no one will suspect that we know. When all is ready we will go to the place."

"And catch him on the hop. Arri, Jafir Khan! We have hunted much together, but never before have we hunted such game as this."

"'Tis all the better, sahib," said the man, smiling. He, too, felt pleased with life. "But it is in my mind that neither wolves nor tiger have ever given such trouble as this one."

"The trouble is, Jafir Khan," said Keston, "we can think as wolves or as tigers. But

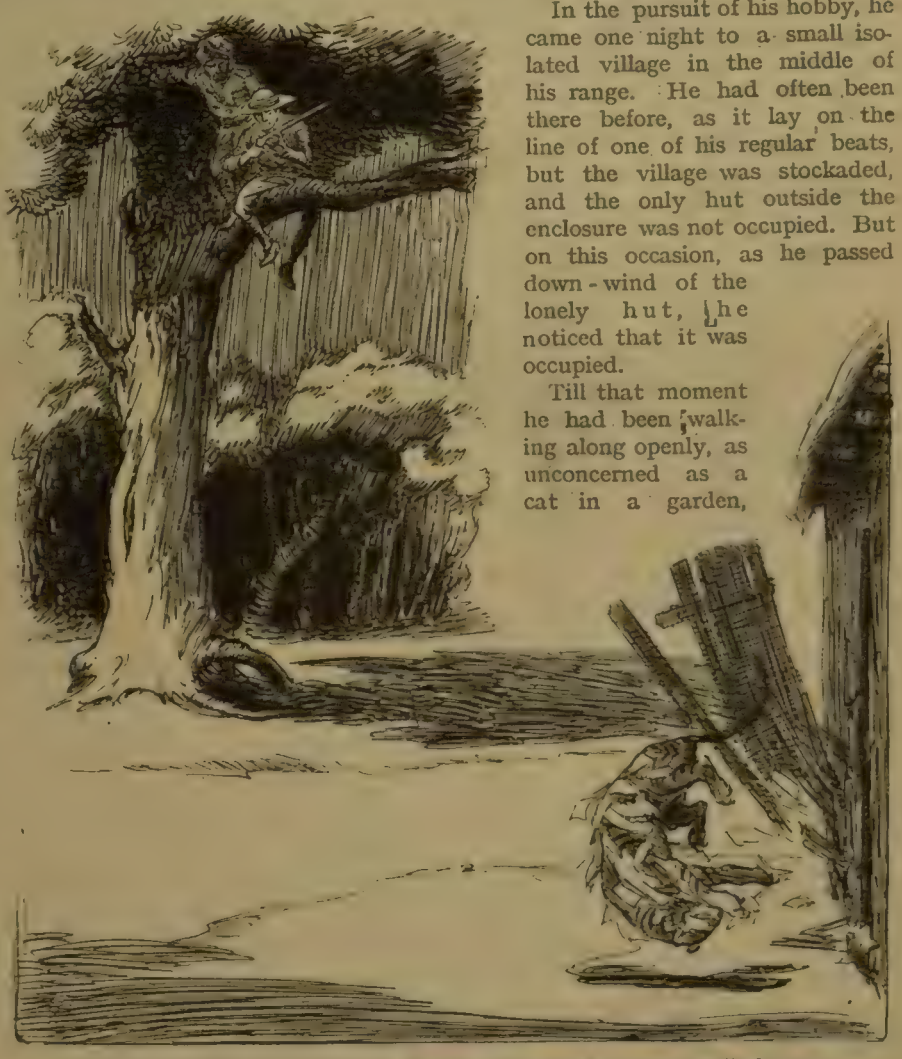
neither you nor I could ever think as a—as this thing."

So for three days more Keston played the lazy *shikari*, loafing about in the forest with a rifle, and occasionally killing a small deer for food. No more bears or other worthy game reported their arrival, for Bishen Dass was permanently away on "departmental duty," his deputy-clerk said. Then, late one evening, Jafir Khan turned up again.

"Sahib," he said, "all is ready. I have marked down the tiger again. It is a moonlight night, and it may be to-night will see the end. If not this night, the next. The bait is set—a very fat bait—and cannot fail. Will your honour be pleased to spend the night sitting on a tree?"

"I've done that before a few times, and I've slept this afternoon," said Keston. "Is it far?"

"About eight miles, sahib. I will order the horses."



There was a sudden commotion in the hut, and then a strange bundle burst out into the moonlight.

III

Why this particular tiger took to man-killing was not very clear. He was in the prime of life and best of condition, capable of killing a buffalo. Probably he had been wounded in some other district, for nothing so surely turns a tiger's wrath on man as a wound, and small blame to him. But whatever the cause, he persisted in his evil ways, taking special pleasure in pulling unfortunate natives out of houses, or off watch machans in the fields. It is not on record that he killed anyone under other circumstances.

In the pursuit of his hobby, he came one night to a small isolated village in the middle of his range. He had often been there before, as it lay on the line of one of his regular beats, but the village was stockaded, and the only hut outside the enclosure was not occupied. But on this occasion, as he passed down-wind of the lonely hut, he noticed that it was occupied.

Till that moment he had been walking along openly, as unconcerned as a cat in a garden, but he immediately crouched and disappeared, the whole five hundred pounds of him. There was no doubt about it. There was man in that hut, and not white man, either. Was there iron? He sniffed and sniffed. He could not notice any trace; but it was as well to make sure. He crept nearer—still no iron; till at last he was lying under the wall at the side of the door with his nose on the sill.

No, there was certainly no iron—only man,

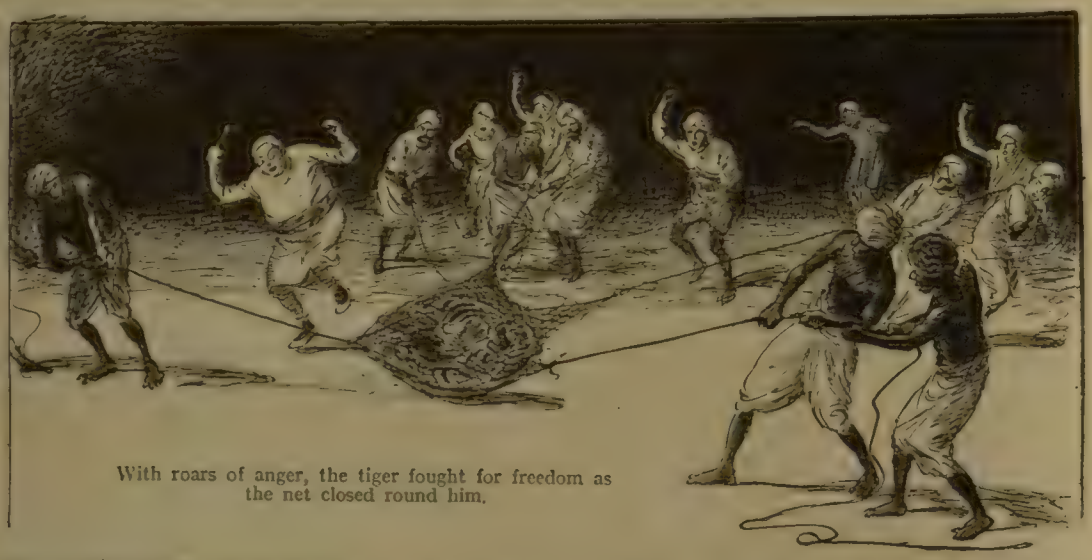
and something like spices; cloves it was, though he did not know it. It was a safe business, such as he loved. He moved his head slowly forward till he could see inside, to make sure of what he was to spring at. Yes, there was a man inside—a good fat man, too, but half hidden behind what looked like white curtains. Well, they would not hinder him. He gathered himself together and sprang.

All carnivora attack their prey silently when the actual moment arrives. If they fail they often express their feelings, and this tiger found ample reason to do so. The curtains were solid, pillars of tough bamboo, let firmly into roof and floor, and lashed to cross logs of teak at top and bottom, forming a cage he could not pass. They had another peculiarity, too, which he soon discovered. As he tore at the bars the white covering came off and stuck to his paws and legs and nose, and after a few moments he stopped to try to get ride of the nuisance.

But as he scratched one thing off his head he left another on it from his paw. So he rubbed his head on the ground and gathered up a whole sheaf of clove-scented, sticky paper, which completely blinded one eye. Roaring with anger and fear, he put both paws to his head; but he had gathered up more with them, and the only result was to close his other eye.

His only idea now was flight, the man could take care of himself; but not being able to see, he charged a wall, thus knocking himself over and accumulating more sticky paper. He next barged into the bars, and tore at them in fury. This time, not only did he get more paper, but someone thrust a large brush, loaded with the sticky stuff, into his face, and then hit him over the nose. Howling dismally, and quite demoralised, he backed, and came against the door, which had been closed by a spring. But though his enemy had made the cage impregnable, being a native, and a very amateur hunter at that, he had relied upon the old crazy door to hold his blinded captive. Of course, it went to pieces before five hundred pounds of frenzied, blind tiger, and the brute rolled out and dashed off at random.

Not twenty yards from the hut was a large tree, and perched on one of its limbs, over a score of feet above the ground, were Keston and Jafir Khan. They heard the riot in the hut, and then saw a strange apparition, a noisy bundle of white paper, burst out into the moonlight. The thing writhed for a moment, then got on its legs and charged full tilt at the very tree on which they were sitting. The collision was too much even for a tiger's thick skull. The luckless beast reeled back, and then fell over, stunned.



With roars of anger, the tiger fought for freedom as the net closed round him.

"Shoot, sahib," said Jafir Khan. "It will be what the fat man deserves, to lose the tiger."

"I know it would," said Keston. "But I can't shoot the poor beast when he's in a paper bag. Besides, I should miss for laughing. Hallo! What's this?"

Someone had whistled from the hut, on which a dim crowd had issued from the village gate. Then a white figure appeared on the roof of the hut, yelled some orders, and disappeared, to reappear immediately on the ground, and take command of the party which cautiously approached the fallen tiger.

"They're going to take him alive. They have got a net and ropes," said Jafir Khan.

"By Jove, they have! That man's a marvel," said Keston. "I say, what is the queer smell? Oh, my aunt! It's paste!"

And he went off into peals of laughter. A man-eating tiger captured with office paste was too much for him altogether. But the crowd below were too keen on their job and making too much row to hear the noise from above. Besides, the tiger was beginning to move. The net was thrown over him, strong cords at its corners were passed across, which were pulled as he rose, and over he went again, well into the net.

Roaring like a fiend he fought for freedom. But each paw, as it got through the net, was lassoed, ropes were passed round him, and in a few minutes the once terrible man-eater suggested nothing so much as an untidy corded giant's parcel in a string-bag. Then the white-clad man struck the helpless beast over the head, and howled insults at him in several languages.

"Hi, Bishen Dass!" cried Keston. "You've got the poor brute. Don't hit him when he's down!"

The baboo looked up.

"Ah, Mr. Keston, sah!" he said, apparently not the least put out by being caught in the act and proved a constructive liar. "You saw all the fun of the fair, eh? Now I have shamed the tiger."

"Sure thing!" said Keston. "But wait till I get down. Look here, Bishen Dass," he said, when he was on the ground. "This is the smartest bit of trapping I ever heard of. But it wasn't playing the game. Why did you tell the villagers to swear there was no tiger? With luck I might have killed it that first day, and that girl would have been still alive. Besides, you don't know how long he might have waited before coming to your trap. He might have killed several more people."

But Bishen Dass, being a Bengali, did not understand how to be ashamed.

"Only low-caste jungle folk, sah," he said. "What do they matter? I told them to say no tiger to your honour, because I wanted to shame Mr. Stripes myself. The men laughed when he made me run, and my clothes were torn. But the consignment of office paste did not arrive till honour's shins were barked on it; so I had to act as per your statement. If not, your honour might have slain tiger, and no shame to tiger being sent out by your honour. But to be spificated in office paste and paper, and put in a net and cage by a Bengali, that great shame. Everyone says what cowards we Bengalis are."

"My aunt!" was all Keston could say, and for a few moments he thought. The "coward" of a Bengali had risked his life to save a coolie woman's child, had lost his temper because he had been laughed at, and, to get his own back, had coolly handed over the wretched jungle folk, unprotected, to the tiger. Then, to complete his revenge, he had sat as bait himself in a bamboo cage, which might or might not be tiger-proof, and had beaten the tiger with office paste and paper.

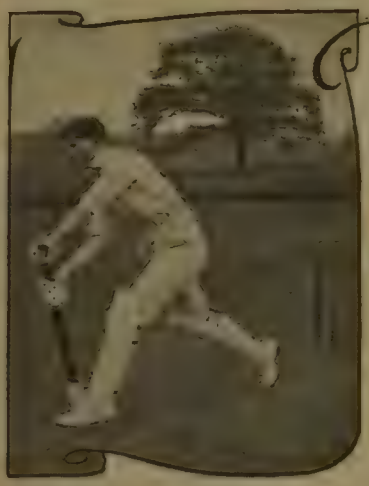
"Jafir Khan," he said, at last. "What do you think of this kind of *shikar*?"

Jafir Khan made a gesture which meant: "Beyond me altogether."

"Same here," said Keston. "Give me simple man-killing wolves and tigers. I can understand them; but I'll never try to understand a Bengali again. Well, Bishen Dass, what are you going to do with him now?"

"Elevate him to roof of hut and drop him into my cage," said the baboo. "Then I send memo of advice to Calcutta Zoo, and Mr. Stripes stay in hut and eat goat till they send cage and rupees for him."

So matters turned out. In due course many rupees and a cage with keepers arrived from Calcutta. "Mister Stripes" found his way there to a large, extra-strong cage, with a hole in the roof, through which his food had to be dropped for safety. And there I saw him later on, and the keeper told me the story of his capture.



J. H. E. Woods, cricket captain of Christ's Hospital School.

Prominent School Cricketers of the Year

By A. PODMORE

WRITING before any of the big school matches have been played it is probable that some of the prominent cricketers of the term have been omitted; but the majority of those mentioned below are sure to justify the good opinion formed of them.

It was generally conceded by those who saw most of the sides that Eton was the best school eleven of 1913, and they look like retaining that position. G. S. Rawstorne, the captain, is, like the majority of the Eton Eleven, a tall, upstanding batsman, with beautiful strokes on the off, good defence, and plenty of power. A brilliant field, his catch on the deep square-leg boundary at Lord's will not be readily forgotten by those who saw it. F. L. Johnstone is quite a fast bowler, and swings away nastily just the last two important yards. Also an excellent field, he is a fine bat. R. A. Foster has increased in pace and, with his peculiar action, takes many wickets. He is quite a good extra cover, and is qualified for Warwickshire, and Rawstorne for Lancashire. Johnstone lives in Scotland. All three go up to Oxford, the captain and Johnstone to Christ Church, and Foster to Magdalen; T. E. G. Nugent, the other old colour, being entered for Sandhurst.

G. Wilson, the Harrow captain, is a beautifully wristy batsman, delightful to watch when once he gets going, but at present a little apt to nibble at the off-balls at first. A brilliant field anywhere, but especially on the off-side, Wilson might also become a useful change bowler. Unlike the rival captain at Eton, he is on the short side, but very stockily built. He goes up to Trinity, Cambridge, and has already appeared in the second eleven of Yorkshire, for which county he is qualified by birth. One of the most useful and polished batsmen on the side is R. G. de Uphaugh, whose unfortunate accident in the Old Harrovians' match nearly kept him out of the game at Lord's last year. He has a birth qualification for Middlesex, and goes up to Christ Church. De Uphaugh is also qualified by residence for Kent.

G. B. Eden, the Winchester captain, is a wicket-keeper of very great promise, and he should improve into a first-class cricketer. A useful batsman, with a good style and straight bat, he should make many runs. Of late years there has been a plethora of really good wicket-keepers, and the 'Varsities are now benefiting thereby; but they have not been so plentiful in 1914.

J. H. Strachan, of Charterhouse, has already at the time of writing proved himself in brilliant form. He is not a rapid scorer at the start, but when he has played himself in he has a fine variety of strokes. A really good racquet player—he and Monier-Williams won the Public Schools Championship—his wristy strokes are strongly in evidence at the wicket, and he is also a fine field, especially in the slips. His bowling is, at present, undeveloped, but he is quite capable of getting wickets.

John Howell, the Repton captain, has been dubbed "the miniature Tom Hayward," on whom he has modelled his style. With footwork quite exceptional in a player so young, he combines rare judgment in picking out the right ball to hit, with a mastery over all strokes known to cricket, seldom, if ever, equalled by a player of his age. He is a brilliant field anywhere, and like his brother, now up at Oxford, equally good

on the football field. He should prove of the greatest value to Surrey, of which county his father was a very popular member. For the second eleven last year he played a fine innings of forty-four against the bowling of Barnes, and also scored a century in the Surrey trial match at the Oval, going in first with Hobbs.

G. S. Rawstorne, cricket captain of Eton College.

W. C. M. Berridge, of Malvern, who—like his rival at Repton—was also captain of football and a very fine centre-half, is another all-round cricketer. A right-hand, medium-pace bowler, Berridge keeps a good length and wants watching. As a batsman, Berridge has done many good things, and in 1912 had an average of over ninety in six House matches. His highest score was 165. He is qualified for Leicestershire, and is not going up to the 'Varsity. He started the season brilliantly.

Rugby have three cricketers of quite exceptional promise in J. S. Poole, the captain, and the two Bryans. Poole, a fine specimen of a school cricketer, is a slow medium left-hand bowler who keeps a good length, and can bring the ball back on any wicket. He should also make many runs. He was chosen for the Lord's Schools last year against the Rest, but was unable to accept the invitation. Not eighteen yet, Poole may go into the Army, but if not Oxford will be his destination. Surrey born, Poole resides in Kent. J. L. Bryan is a left-hand bat, now in his third year in the eleven. Two years ago he made a plucky effort to turn the tide in that disastrous first innings against Marlborough, and in 1913 scored a brilliant century. Possessed of every stroke of a left-hander, he is a quite useful right-hand bowler. R. T. Bryan, the younger brother, is also a very promising left-hand bat and slow right-hand leg-break bowler with a very good action and occasional googly. He was in the eleven before he was fifteen, and as he is only in his seventeenth year now, he should have still more opportunities to show his capabilities at school. The Bryans both qualify for Kent by birth as well as residence.

G. Wilson, cricket captain of Harrow.

D. G. Veitch, the Westminster captain, has already more than justified the good opinion formed of him, and, with added strength, now makes his runs rapidly all round the wicket. He is a change bowler and a keen field, on a ground which—at Vincent Square—is not always easy. Veitch, who is a son of the famous old Corinthian, is not going up to the 'Varsity. As he has lived for the past five years at Wimbledon, he is qualified for Surrey.

G. W. E. Whitehead, the Clifton captain, had the honour of representing the Public Schools at Lord's both in 1912 and 1913, and had much to do with the victory over the M.C.C. in the first-named year. He is a cricketer of parts, and has made history at Clifton.

R. G. de Uphaugh, of the Harrow Eleven.

G. B. Eden, cricket captain of Winchester.

A very patient batsman, with a wonderful defence, Whitehead is particularly strong on the leg-side, but has strokes all round the wicket. A fine field in the slips, he is also a very useful slow bowler. He goes up to Trinity, Oxford, in October, and is qualified for Kent. A. A. Leslie, a very promising young wicket-keeper, has greatly improved in his batting, and has made many runs.

For the third year in succession Haileyburians are captained by H.D. Hake, who first made his appearance in the eleven in 1910. Possessed of beautiful wrists, Hake, though a not very stylish batsman, has fine strokes on the off-side. He was one of the best of the racquet players at Queen's Club for the last two years. A fine field himself, he brought the eleven up to a great state of perfection last year, and he is also quite competent to take the wicket, which he did all last year until the Lord's match. He is doubly qualified for Hampshire, and goes up to Queens', Cambridge, in October.

R. D. Busk, the Marlborough captain, is a bowler of very great promise, though he rather failed to do himself justice last year. Of very powerful build, Busk bowls fast-medium, with a very easy action, and was second in the bowling averages of Dorset County. A hard-hitting batsman, he should make many runs, and was fortunate in retaining the services of R. C. Ashfield in the school eleven. Ashfield is a very promising batsman, and is qualified for Kent.

G. P. Brooke Taylor is again captain of cricket at Cheltenham. Tall and well built, he is a left-handed batsman of the aggressive type. Against the M.C.C. last year at Lord's he shaped extremely well, and carried his bat for a splendid innings of fifty when everybody else was doing badly. A fine field, he is also quite good behind the stumps. A brilliant all-round athlete, he was, in addition, captain of Rugby football, and is a dashing wing three-quarter. He is qualified for Derbyshire, and should have a chance for the county in the holidays.

J. H. Strachan, of the Charterhouse Eleven.

Born in Cambridgeshire, but with a residential qualification for Kent, R. A. Dallas Brooks, the captain of Dover, is sure to make his mark. He is a very good batsman, and is likely to be a big and powerful man when full grown. The strength of his play lies in strong defence, powerful driving, and a good leg-side glide, but he had a tendency to play forward, on a not too hard wicket, without getting the left elbow out enough, a fault he has corrected this year.

W. C. Berridge, captain of the Malvern Eleven.

W. F. D. La Touche, of

Sedbergh, is another instance of a fine all-round athlete, and should have a great chance of his Rugger Blue at Cambridge at half-back. A free bat, with a good eye, he is always a dangerous opponent, and this year has devoted more time to the game than previously, when the rifle range had greater attractions for him. A fine shot, he has been captain of football for two years, and has twice won the school long run over the fells and heather. He

J. Howell, captain of Repton.

R. Sherwell, the eighth brother of a celebrated cricket family, is one of the best batsmen turned out by Tonbridge, and that means much. A left-hander of the aggressive type, he has all the strokes at his command, but has a tendency, like so many young cricketers, to "feel" for the well-pitched-up ball on the off. A fine field, Sherwell—like his famous brother, the South African wicket-keeper—has a qualification for Middlesex. When he leaves Tonbridge he

J. S. Poole, cricket captain of Rugby.

goes up to Pembroke in October, the college of which his father, the famous Cambridge miler, was also a member. He lives in Shropshire. H. E. Appleyard, who will always be remembered at Sedbergh for taking all ten of Shrewsbury's wickets in the first match between the schools, is barely eighteen, and left school too young for his cricket to be "set," but if he sticks to it well he should develop into a really fine player. He is a most promising medium-pace left-hand bowler, the ball coming across quickly from the leg, and he is brilliant in the field. He has already represented the Yorkshire colts.

will study at the London University, and so should not be lost to London cricket. A feature of the Tonbridge season, 1913, was the great stand he

A. E. R. Gilligan, captain of the Dulwich Eleven.

G. P. B. Taylor, cricket captain of Cheltenham College.

put up against Sherborne in partnership with his brother—a partnership which was not dissolved until the second century was hoisted.

A. E. R. Gilligan, the Dulwich captain, is the second brother of the famous triumvirate who made history for the school in 1913. He has won the Public Schools Gymnastic Championship at Aldershot for the last two years, and is one of the best all-round athletes in the country at the

H. E. Appleyard, Sedbergh.

present time. Powerfully built, he delivers the ball from a good height with great pace, and an occasional break back which has proved the downfall of more than one great cricketer, including Hobbs. A forcing but not stylish batsman, he hits the ball very hard in front of the wicket, and is one of the finest fieldsmen playing. Keen and enthusiastic as he is, much is expected of him at Cambridge.

A. J. W. Pearson, of St. Paul's, is an instance of a young bowler who has not disappointed those who thought highly of him in his first year in the school eleven in 1912. A genuine "googly" bowler, Pearson has acquired the difficult art of keeping a length, and other schools especially dread him. His six wickets for nine runs against Brighton was only the prelude. He has a peculiar run to the wicket: four short steps, then a double shuffle, and four steps again before he delivers. Quite a good field, he has greatly improved in his batting. He goes up to Pembroke, Oxford, in October.

J. L. Bryan, of the Rugby Eleven.

C. H. L. Skeet, the St. Paul's captain, is a very fine free-hitting batsman, with a particularly good square cut, a fair change bowler, and brilliant outfield with great dash.

J. B. R. Challen, a son of the famous Somerset cricketer and Welsh International Association player, is captain of St. Bees, and a fine all-round cricketer. A sound, free-hitting batsman, with the left-hander's pronounced liking for the covers, he is also a good, medium-paced, right-hand bowler. He is also an excellent field, and has at least another year at school, though he is going to try for a scholarship at Oxford in December. By birth he is qualified to play for Devonshire; but has a dual qualification, as Sussex can also claim him by virtue of a four years' residence at Eastbourne.

W. F. D. La Touche, of Sedbergh.

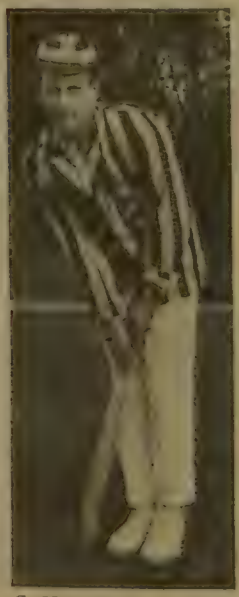
D. G. Veitch, captain of the Westminster Eleven.

T. E. Andrews, who captains Merchant Taylors for the second year, should develop into one of the best cricketers turned out by the school since the days of J. E. Raphael. Tall and strongly developed, he has every natural advantage, and combines dogged defence with brilliant hitting capacity, most of his strokes being made in front of the wicket. He has a classical exhibition to Downing, and is qualified for Middlesex.

R. A. D. Brooks, cricket captain of Dover College.

A. O. D. Taylor was captain of Forest for the second year, and in the two Waughs and C. V. Thompson had three of the most promising schoolboy players of the year. The last-named should prove a very valuable acquisition

to Essex. Taylor, who is qualified for Surrey, is a left-handed batsman of the dashing type. When once settled down he is quite delightful to watch, but is a little shaky for the first few overs. He bowls slow medium, and is a very fine point. He goes up to Hertford in October.



C. H. L. Skeet, cricket captain of St. Paul's School.

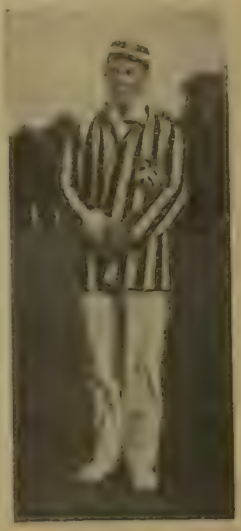
J. H. E. Woods, the captain of Christ's Hospital, is another instance of a fine all-round athlete. He played three-quarters for the school team, which he skippered last season, but is really a full-back, in which position he should have a great chance for his Blue at Oxford. He has an exhibition at Balliol. Powerfully built, he is particularly strong on the leg side and through the covers. Though he bats right he is, like so many others, a medium-paced left-hand bowler, and ambidextrous in the field. Woods is qualified for Middlesex.

G. H. Heslop, the Lancing captain whose father is the head master of Sevenoaks Grammar School, comes of a well-known cricketing family, and is qualified for Kent. A tall, upstanding batsman, Heslop hits tremendously hard, is strong on the leg side, and has a very good square cut. Rather above fast-medium, he delivers the ball from a good height, and if the conditions of wind favour him frequently swings more than a foot. The Eastbourne boys will not forget him a year ago, when those who saw him say he was quite unplayable. He goes up to Trinity, Cambridge, in October.

J. B. R. Challen, cricket captain of St. Bees' School.

A. Gordon, who is again captain of Bradfield, is a slow left-hand bowler, who keeps an immaculate length, and is generally sure of a plentiful crop of wickets. Strongly built, he is equally good on the football field, where he plays left back.

K. White, the captain of Wellingborough, is a younger brother of the Cambridge cricketer, and polished batsman of very great experience for so young a player. The game is wonderfully looked after at Wellingborough, where Mr. P. A. Fryer takes a personal interest in it, and superintends it himself.



A. J. W. Pearson, of St. Paul's Eleven.

R. A. T. Miller, the Uppingham captain, was one of the best wicket-keepers in the schools when he gained his colours two years ago, and he has not looked backward. Something more than a useful bat, he has proved his value to Uppingham on the football field as well. He qualifies for Sussex by residence.

M. Dempsey, the Shrewsbury captain, is an all-round player of marked ability, and G. E. J. Gent, of King's, Canterbury, is another instance of a wonderful all-rounder, as he is one of the best scrum-halves in the country. J. G. Dixon, who is qualified for Essex, is one of the best players turned out by Felsted; and O. G. Hake, the Eastbourne captain, brother of "H. D.," of Haileybury, is a wicket-keeper of very great promise, and a really good bat.

S. B. Morgan, the Clifton left-hander, is a young bowler of undoubted promise, and it is a pity that he will not have another year in the team. Bowling round the wicket with a good, easy action, Morgan gets the

arm well up, and bowling an immaculate length, makes the ball whip off the pitch, with plenty of spin. He is seen at his best when the wicket is quite fast, and other bowlers are comparatively innocuous. Morgan is also quite a useful bat.

W. A. Roberts, of St. Paul's, is another left-hander who has come on a great deal since last year, and like Paton, of Dulwich, shows great promise. A. H. H. Gilligan, of the latter school, was away for the first few matches of the term, recovering from an attack of scarlet fever; but he soon made his presence felt on his return. He delivers the ball right hand round the wicket, with a very peculiar and arresting action, and from what is generally called the wrong leg. Slow to medium, he gets plenty of spin on, and is very deceptive in his flight. He is a fine forcing bat, with good strokes all round the wicket. Needless to say, like all the family, he is good in the field.

J. R. Barnes, of Marlborough, is one of the soundest bats in school cricket, and watches the ball right up to the bat. He is particularly clever at the forward hook stroke, and very daring in his method of accomplishing it. He bowls slow leg-breaks, with an occasional googly; but like the majority of his class of bowlers, he finds it very difficult to get a length.

H. L. du Boulay, the Cheltenham batsman, is a polished player of the typical Eton type, with one particularly fine stroke between mid-off and the covers, which wants a lot of stopping. He is a splendid mid-off, and the ball has to be hit very wide of him to get past, and he has a wonderfully safe pair of hands for catching. Though tall and well built he is quite young, and will captain the side next year.

J. A. Sanger is no believer in gentle tactics, and gets the full face of the bat to the ball, which he hits with refreshing vigour. He has a particularly powerful drive all along the ground just past the bowler on the on-side. He is a quite useful medium-fast bowler and a good field. Like his captain (G. P. B. Taylor) and Rivock, he is a very fair wicket-keeper, and Cheltenham are fortunate in having three in the side.

R. D. Crossman bids fair to be numbered among the many great batsmen turned out by Eton. He has a variety of beautiful strokes on the off-side, and shows a great predilection for the covers. R. T. Christy is a very promising young bowler, who, getting a deal of spin on the ball, swings in very nastily in the last two yards.

Bradfield, in a young player named Fawcus, possess a left-handed batsman who, if he sticks to it, should make a great name for himself, as should H. S. Gentry, of Christ's Hospital; both of whom are barely fifteen. Gentry gets the arm well up, and, keeping a good length, comes sharply from the pitch, but at present his fielding needs much improvement. Doubtless this—such an important feature of the game—will be seen to.

At Haileybury there is a young player named Malden for whom a great future is prophesied in a year or two. There is no manner of question that there are plenty of promising young players, who have been splendidly coached at their "preparatories," and only need careful nursing to uphold the prestige of the schools.

I learn that G. B. Eden, the Winchester captain, has resigned his place behind the wicket in favour of Williams, who is a very good keeper, and lets few balls pass him. He takes the ball very close to the wicket, and like his rival (J. D. Letts, of Eton, who is a left hander), takes the ball very well on the leg-side. Wells-Cole, another new choice, is a good swinging left-hand bowler, who is very dangerous with a new ball.

The LAST of HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell

SYNOPSIS OF OPENING INSTALMENTS

At the beginning of the January term the captaincy of Kellcaster School falls to Penn. The latter is the sixth member of his family to hold the position; but, unlike his five brothers, he is not brilliant at sport, and the more thoughtful Kellcastrians wonder whether he will be equal to the task of maintaining his newly acquired authority.

Among the new boys is an eighteen-year-old American, named Maxon Rope, whom Penn discovers teaching the juniors baseball when they should be playing football. Rope is defiant when Penn informs him that he must conform to certain unwritten school rules. The American collects a few juniors, including Gage and Ellis, known as the Persian Lambs, and proposes that they form themselves into a league to strike for the "rights" of juniors, calling themselves the Birds of Freedom.

Though the school does not know it, Penn is working for an important 'Varsity scholarship, and, advised by the head master, he spends a week-end in Cambridge to interview a don. While there he calls upon his brother Jim, who is troubled by a horse-dealer who has a grudge against him, and threatens to report Jim Penn for "breaking gate" (an offence for which he is liable to be "sent down"), unless he receives thirty pounds by an early date.

This is the sum, the horse-dealer mentions, owed to him by an undergraduate named Spalding, who formerly resided in the rooms now occupied by Jim Penn, but whose whereabouts since he has been unable to trace.

The head master tells Penn in confidence that Rope, whose name is really Spalding, has been expelled both from an American University and from Cambridge for riotous behaviour, and has been sent to Kellcaster in a last hope of bringing him to a sense of order.

Realising that Rope (or Spalding) is the cause of his brother's difficulty, Penn tells the American that he must go to Cambridge at once, and pay his debt to the horse-dealer, but without mentioning his connection with Kellcaster School. Rope defiantly refuses, and handing a newspaper to Penn, tells him to read a letter which he indicates.

CHAPTER XVII

SOMETHING FOR PARSONS

IF a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing at once; at any rate, the Persian Lambs believed so. And so, while Penn and Rope were coming to grips below, the Lambs were squatted on their beds in the dormitory, devouring the last shred of the tongue (which tasted ever so much better for the adventures it had been through), and discussing ways and means of backing up Penn. Simpson Minor, Willett, and the Maggot, who by persistence and perseverance had always managed to be put in the same "dorm" as the Lambs, had been invited to share the tongue and counsels.

For forty minutes after they had gone to bed the dormitories enjoyed some measure of liberty till their prefects came. It was not a measure to be abused, of course; but in moderation it was more or less elastic, *pro rata* in proportion (as the text-books say) with the amenability of the prefects' respective deputies. But Clough, who was supposed to look after E dormitory in the School House till Lynge turned up—"supposed" is Clough's own word—was a man of moods; some nights you might not talk above a whisper, on others you might have quite a reasonable time if Clough happened to be deep in a book. Clough's discipline went by fits and starts.

Now it was an unfortunate thing for Parsons that while Gage and Ellis were debating ways and means he happened to sit up in his bed across the room—and cackled.

By rights Parsons should have had nothing

to cackle over, but in fact he was extremely pleased, for in the interview with Pyman he had escaped a ringleader's priority, and manœuvring modestly into the last place of the six had duly profited.

Pyman's arm was tiring when it had reached him, and his hide was hard.

It had just occurred to Parsons how clever he had been to work into the last place; and when funny things occurred to Parsons he cackled. You could hardly call his laughter anything else.

And not only did he choose a moment for the noise when the eyes of Gage had strayed in his direction, but—folly of all folly!—he sat up in bed. Into the line of Gage's vision he protruded himself!

Now Gage was feeling virtuous and at peace with all the world; but the sight of Parsons cackling stirred slumbering fires—Parsons? The beast who'd spoiled his tea party, and was chuckling over it!

Cackling! To his—Gage's—very face!

Gage whispered to Ellis, nudged Willett and the Maggot, and slipped off his bed. When Parsons saw this he choked another cackle down half-way, ducked, and pretended to sleep. But Gage's steps were not in his direction. They pattered up the dormitory to Clough, who was propped upon his elbow with a book. Gage touched his shoulder, decorously.

"Please!" he said.

To his astonishment, Clough rolled round, and looked up at once.

"That you, Gage?" he grunted. "Who was it made that infernal noise just now?"

"Clough, what noise?" Gage inquired, demurely.

"A row like a young hyena moulting."

"It was Parsons laughing, please," said Gage, the tell-tale!

"Oh! Parsons laughing, was it? Oh!" Clough grunted this ominously, because he had no use for Parsons. In his view, as in Gage's, Parsons "sucked up."

"Well, anyhow, what do you want, Gage?" he said.

Gage was not the man to beat about a bush.

"Clough," he answered, gently, "may we anoint Parsons?"

"For cackling?"

"And for other things," said Gage.

Clough recalled some details that had reached him about strange doings in Rope's study that afternoon. He cocked a sympathetic eye at Gage.

"Oh, go away!" he growled. "If I heard nothing——"

"You wouldn't, Clough."

"If you don't kick up a filthy row over it—I'm reading—go away!" With which Clough rolled over on his elbow again.

Gage's bare feet stole back silently, and on Ellis he bestowed a meaning nod. By the dumb alphabet in which he was so adept he then issued instructions to the other three, whereupon the Maggot hopped off for a tooth-glass, in which he began straightway to compound a mixture. It was compounded of as many varieties of dentifrice paste and powder as Willett, his assistant, could lay hands upon; and, when well mixed with the handle of a tooth-brush, presented a gratifying appearance in the bottom of the glass.

"Now, water," bade the Maggot, in a whisper. "And ink—if there is any up here?"

Ink? Yes—Simpson Minor had a pot of ink, which, because it was green stylographic ink, he had secreted in his washstand for fear of borrowers. Loth, rather, to produce it now, he yielded to persuasive pantomime—and green ink and water brimmed the glass up bravely. There is not one chemist in a million who, surveying it when the Maggot had finished stirring, could have told you what that glass's contents were.

Very stealthily (to keep faith with Clough), very carefully (to avoid spilling a drop) the Maggot bore the priceless cup to Gage. Gage sniffed at it, and signalled his approval.

"A bath towel?" he whispered now to Ellis.

"Righto, sir!" Ellis whispered back.

Now as Parsons was pretending to be asleep he dared not sit up for cackling or non-cackling, but he had heard Gage patter back from Clough, and had listened apprehensively for what followed. One eye cocked furtively above the bedclothes had revealed odd peeps of the subdued activity of which Gage's bed was the hub. For example, a glimpse of the Maggot's night-attire as he sampled tooth-powders, and of his elbow industriously mixing. Either intuition or a guilty conscience assured Parsons that these preparations were made for *him*, and bitterly he regretted that he had sat up—and cackled.

With five co-plunderers to back him, Parsons was a brave man—very brave. Cut off by bricks and mortar from his allies, Parsons shuddered as he shammed to sleep.

A rustle that now stirred the other beds, as the softest June breath stirs the slumbering

leaves; such *susurra* and nothing louder apprised his tense senses that, apart from the Persian Lambs and company, the dormitory was beginning to take interest in the scene. Unsympathetic beasts, he called them mentally; there was not one there who would lift a finger for him. Not one who would attempt to wrest him from the clutches of the Persian Lambs!

"What a fool I was," he thought, "to rag that tea!" How fervently he longed for the step of Lynge.

He was debating whether he would rise and run for it, when the bedclothes were raised gently and one thumb and one finger gripped his nose. He snored, and the grip tightened.

"Don't sham to be asleep," he heard Gage whisper.

So Parsons turned upon his back, and opened dismayed eyes upon the following picture; to wit:—

Gage—tweaking his nose.

Ellis—grinning behind a towel.

The Maggot—carrying (cautiously) a tooth-glass.

Willett—with a pair of bath slippers.

Simpson Minor—looking pained and pious

"Oh can't you leave a man alone?" he whined. "I'm asleep, I tell you."

"*We're* not," Gage said, meaningly.

"Leave me alone, you beasts!"

In a sepulchral, very low voice Gage responded:—

"You didn't leave my tea party alone. Sit up!"

A desperate plea leaped into Parson's mind.

"But Pyman lammed us frightfully for that."

"Don't sham to be asleep," said Gage, tweaking his nose. Parsons Minor opened his eyes, and gazed in alarm at the invaders.

"And we," Gage said, "will anoint you."

"I didn't mean to rag you, Gage. Honestly, I never——"

"We *mean* to anoint you, Parsons."

The thumb and finger were still gripping his nose; they tightened when he tried to raise his voice.

"Keep dead still," Gage commanded.

"Get up," said Willett.

"If you don't——" Simpson Minor began mightily.

Very brave with five allies behind him, there was nothing of the ruffling swashbuckler left in Parsons now. He shivered as he glanced at Willett's slippers, and experience had taught him what to do. He had helped to anoint others—once.

Did he recall, think you, how he had revelled in *their* plight, while he rose without a word and took up his position at the bed's foot? While he dropped his head over his basin in the attitude in which we are shampooed? No doubt he did—when Ellis tucked the bath towel round his shoulders.

"Are you ready, Parsons?" came Gage's awful whisper.

"Yes," he gasped, and indrew one deep breath.

Solemnly Gage took the glass, and with an expert's hand he poured over that humbled head the abominable mixture which no chemist could have defined. It coursed a sticky path through Parson's hair. It trickled from his brow to cheek. It gathered in thick clots upon his lips.

And all had happened in profoundest stillness. In a stillness as complete, they tripped from him. Like Arabs, they stole noiselessly to bed.

When Lynge arrived, just nineteen minutes afterwards, Parsons was still spluttering beneath his bedclothes. And beneath theirs the Persian Lambs were—cackling!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEEDLE IN THE HAYSTACK

"READ that!" Rope repeated, and tossed the paper to Penn.

But Penn was not there to stand this. He had been thinking what a nuisance it was that his business with the Persian Lambs had prevented him from reading to-day's *Daily World* before he came there; and anxious as he was to see it now and to secure Rope's aid in extricating Jim, he never lost sight of his resolve to "tame" the other. A weaker character might have tried, in the circumstances, to conciliate Rope. Penn meant to break him.

"No," he said, in a voice as hard as steel. "You'll stand up, straight, and read it out."

"All right," Rope tried to say indifferently. But he was promising himself a sharp revenge as soon as his enemy heard what he had to read. After all, to sting this cold beast into a paddy would be some return, he thought, for the humiliation Penn had heaped on him.

"I'll begin with the letter to the editor," he went on, shrugging his narrow shoulders. "Then I'll read the leading article." He paused to glance at Penn maliciously. "The letter's dated, don't you forget it, from Cambridge. From Cambridge, Penn!"

"Get on with it!" snapped Penn.

"From Cambridge," Rope reiterated, watching for some expression of alarm. But the blue eyes that were fixed on him had not faltered; so that, willy-nilly, he was seized with admiration for Penn's self-control. He contrasted this with his own agitation on discovering that Penn knew his antecedents: and he made a mental note to copy such effective self-restraint. It was so galling to the "other fellow." And it seemed the thing.

Penn would have smiled if he had known Rope's thoughts. He would have told himself that Kellcaster was beginning to do its work.

"Get on with it," he said. "Whatever are you waiting for?"

"Oh, nothing," Rope said, queerly. "Well, here it goes, Penn. Addressed to the editor—

"DEAR SIR,—I agree entirely with the letter in to-day's issue of 'One Deeply Interested.' I am not quite in his position, because, happily, I have no son at a public school, but I can bear out his argument that the habits of extravagance contracted at such places continue with a boy when he leaves school, and mar his prospects. . . .

"Am I reading distinctly enough?" Rope asked, raising his head to see how Penn was taking it.

"Carry on," said Penn.

"My business is situated in a University town, and many of my customers are undergraduates. If I had not made enough to render me independent, I might be chary of contributing my quota to the truth which your valuable correspondence is revealing. However, I can testify quite freely, and I am certain, sir, that the undergraduates here bring from their public schools habits of extravagance, improvidence, and worse. . . ."

Rope paused again.

"And now look out!" he said.

"Let me give you an example. I am a horse-dealer and stable-keeper. At the beginning of last term an undergraduate hired a mare from me. He let her down and hurt her badly. But instead of bringing that mare back and paying for the damage, he left her on the high road at the mercy of any passer-by. When I went to his rooms later he was nowhere to be found, but I was received very rudely by a friend of his (also an undergraduate), who declared that he had left the University. . . .

"A friend of his," Rope reiterated, with a sly smile. "Received very rudely. Eh, Penn?"

But Penn remained immovable.

"That all?" he asked.

"Oh, no; lots more. Just listen—

"The undergraduate who let my mare down was quite a youth, and had clearly only just left school. Now I ask you, sir, is that the conduct of a gentleman? Is that how they taught him to behave? Are those the morals and manners of our public schools? I fear they are."

Rope leered, and lowered the paper.

"That gets your goat!" he drawled.

"Any more, Rope?"

"In case, Mr. Editor, this seems an idle charge, I am prepared, in the interests of your valuable inquiry, to substantiate it by giving you the name of the college and of the two undergraduates who treated me in that way. One robbed me; the other assaulted me and tried to shield his friend. Meantime, I enclose my card, and am, dear sir, etcetera."

"That *is* all—from him," said Rope, significantly.

"You said something about a leading article?"

"Yes, Penn. There's a leader on another page. But perhaps you'd rather read that to yourself."

"Stand up, Rope. Stand straight up. Read it out."

"The leader?"

Penn nodded.

Mr. Pepperdine's explicit charge had come as a godsend very likely to the *Daily World*. It was something definite at last to go upon. Among the vague generalities and loose impeachments of a system with which its correspondence columns had been filled, this detailed accusation gleamed as a gem among the dross. It was the little leaven which leavened the whole mass. To reach a nearer simile, it was the needle in the haystack for which the paper had been groping.

A fine needle and a sharp one; just the thing to prick some life into the bogey of public school degeneracy! So the *Daily World* had snatched it gratefully, and pricked with all its might.

With true journalistic ingenuity it took the facts and bent them to its argument. The shameful outrage was symptomatic, it deplored, of the indifference to commercial values which prevailed in public schools. What youth who had been taught some due regard for money could have bought so lightly of the loss which his wickedness inflicted on an honest tradesman? But let the reflective reader pause and ask himself this question: Was the boy the more to blame, or the system which mis-trained him?

And thus the *Daily World*, to half a column of nonsense. But it ended on a sterner note, when it demanded, with a fine parade of outraged feeling, that its correspondent must supply it with the name of the offender and his college.

For we doubt gravely (it concluded) if the best interests of our schools themselves will suffer us to withhold these particulars from the public. And we remember that we owe a duty to the parents of Great Britain which we shall discharge, if called upon, with neither fear nor favour. We are waiting further details.

Rope had declaimed the journalist's fine periods with gusto.

"You see," he said, when he had finished, "you see now, Penn, what they mean. They're going to publish my name and your brother's, and our college!"

Penn made no answer for the moment. Leaning back, with his eyes closed, he was recalling many half-thoughts which had flashed across his mind while Rope was reading. He was weighing them.

It was significant, he mused, that Pepperdine made no mention in his letter of the bill which he had extracted from that other undergraduate to recoup his loss. Why had Pepperdine omitted this?

One explanation suggested itself immediately, bringing a queer smile to Penn's lips which baffled Rope, who watched him. Had Pepperdine been crafty enough to turn the correspondence in the newspaper to his own avaricious ends? Had he written that letter as a cunning means of exerting pressure upon Jim? Was the threat of exposure a lever to ensure Jim paying up?

Penn smiled again, and thought this very likely.

But how was this going to affect the point of Rope's confession? Not in the slightest, so far as he could see. Pepperdine might write off to the papers—the *Daily World* might explode its lofty bombs—but Rope had got to own up all the same.

"How can you possibly imagine, Rope," he said, at last, "that this rubbish in the paper here saves you?"

"Eh?" Rope answered, sharply. "How?"

"Yes, how?"

"Because it's clear enough. You don't want your brother's name figuring as the batterer

and assaulter in the paper. Now, do you, Penn?"

"Leave my brother out," Penn bade him, curtly.

"But I can't, you see. Unless your brother squares his dear friend Pepperdine, it's bound to all come out. Can't you see, Penn, that crafty old beast Pepperdine's letter is aimed more at getting his money back than anything else. Your brother's got the hint. If he pays up now, old Pep. won't tell the paper any more. If he doesn't——"

Rope stopped and flung his hands out. He began to laugh with quiet satisfaction. Penn was watching him through half-closed eyes.

"You forget, Rope. You're the man who's going to take the blame."

"Oh, no, I'm not. I'm on velvet. If I don't own up, the Head can only fire me. What do I care if I am fired?"

"But Pepperdine?"

"He can't proceed against me, even if you tell him where I am. How can he? He's put himself out of court by taking a bill in satisfaction from your brother. The bursar called me a sea-lawyer once, Penn. He hit me off. I'm pretty fly."

"But you know, of course," Penn answered, coldly, "that none of this will wash. *You* let the horse down. *You're* going to pay the price. Look at it another way: Do you think I'm going to let my brother be disgraced through you?"

"Oh, cut it out!" sneered Rope. "The family honour, and all that sort of stunt—eh what?"

"I don't care tuppence for the paper," Penn answered, controlling himself with difficulty. "Pepperdine wouldn't dare to send Jim's name to it! But you forget, Rope, that if the bill isn't met, he will report Jim to the tutor for cutting gate."

"And Jim the Great goes down awhile. A nice thing for the Penns!" laughed Rope.

"Ah! but. Pepperdine gave Jim another alternative, Rope. He gave him the alternative of finding you."

"He did?"

"He did. We've found you. And we're going to produce you."

"You mean it?"

"Of course. Rope, will you go off to the Head now? Or will you suggest some way of settling it without him?"

Rope looked up slyly.

"You don't want the Head to have the worry of it?" he said.

"I don't. Besides," Penn added, with a broad sense of justice. "you got into the scrape before you came to Kellcaster. It was a scrape outside the Head's—er—jurisdiction. And before it. For that reason——"

"You think you can keep it from him, without damage to your duty as captain? You think you'd be all right to keep it from him?"

Penn was relieved to find the other more reasonable.

"I'm not sure as yet," he answered, thoughtfully. "I'll have to think that over. But that's a problem that can wait. The immediate point is this: Assuming that we keep the Head out of it for the present—have you another banker?"

Rope frowned and shook his head.

"Well, Pepperdine might trust you—with his hand on you. He's more keen on finding you than anything. Anyhow, if we produce you, we clear my brother and spike that bounder's guns. That's what I'm after. And you've got to help."

Rope paced the room, his shoulders humped, the knuckle of his forefinger between his lips. Suddenly he stopped, and gazed at Penn intently.

"Say," he said, "you give me till to-morrow?"

"To find a way?"

"I'll tell you to-morrow morning, after chapel," Rope said, vaguely.

"Oh, very well."

With a curt nod, Penn departed; he believed that Rope had come to his senses at last, and between them they could surely extricate old Jim? While, as for the menace of the *Daily World*—well, Rope once produced to Pepperdine, they'd hear no more from it.

With some time left before he need turn in, Penn paused before his bookcase, then took down his old lexicon.

Worry is no good to brain-work. In theory nothing is more excellent than the relief of the mind by absorption in a counter occupation; in practice, very little more difficult. For the brain resents the double call upon it, and being a very conscientious organ warns you flatly that it will not serve two masters.

Since his return from Cambridge, Penn had been discovering this. He was painfully aware that, thanks to Maxon Rope, his work had suffered. He was not sanguine of his prospects in the scholarship exam. And he was due to sit for it next Saturday.

But now for a good hour, he told himself, he would clear the rails of Rope and Pepperdine,

of Jim and that preposterous newspaper. No more banging, crashing, jarring in mental shuntings. He would steam off on the main line, with his books.

But Fate, by the agency of Sergeant Cutlack, decreed otherwise.

"Just come, sir—by this evening's post, sir," the latter was remarking as he proffered a letter. "It's marked urgent, or I'd have kept it till to-morrow, as I always do."

"I never heard you tap," said Penn.

"I tapped three times, sir. Thank you, sir. Good night, sir."

The writing on the envelope was Jim's, and as Penn opened it two scraps of newspaper fell fluttering. He left them where they fell, for instantly he guessed what they must be, and turned to the letter itself, which, dated that morning, showed every evidence of haste.

In a beastly rush to catch the post (Jim scrawled). You'll see why, when you've read the two enclosures. Both are from this morning's *Daily World*.

"Of course!" Penn commented. "I know them."

They'll show you what the hound P, is up to. Well, I saw him ten minutes ago, Den. He said he'd wait and see if I came up to scratch, and drop the matter if I met the bill. Otherwise he must tell the paper or my tutor, but he hadn't made his mind up which. You note the cunning of the artful brute; he's fitted two strings to his bow.

Now look here, old man. I've done my level best to find the money, but I can't. The bill is due next Saturday. And that's the very day, as bad luck has it, that you sit for your exam. Of course, I hate to worry you, but instead of coming up on Friday night come up earlier in the day, for you and I must put our heads together. Shall I write to that editor and tell him Pepperdine's real motive? That would spike the old beast's guns, but isn't it too risky? And would it be playing the game to use what Pepperdine has told me against him? Do you think it would?

Penn looked up from the letter. "Now I wonder," he murmured to his lexicon, "if it would be playing the game? But anyhow it couldn't save old Jim. If the paper could be closed to Pepperdine he'd trot off to Jim's tutor."

He asked me if I'd found that bounder Spalding. I'm glad I took your tip, Den, and got his written promise for the bill back if I did find Spalding. At least, I was glad at the time. But now it doesn't help. For I haven't found Spalding, and I'm not likely to. Of course, I'm not.

Anyhow, come up as early as you can on Friday. Then we'll see what's to be done. So long. This worry is playing old Harry with my cricket.

Here the letter ended as abruptly as it had begun, and Penn could not help smiling at the last few words. The worry was "playing old Harry" with something more than cricket!

Try as he might, now, it was impossible to fix his mind upon his books. The puzzle was too complicated and exacting. "It's such a tangle," he kept saying to his faithful "Liddell," "such a tangle!"

But two thoughts emerged remorselessly and crystallised. They threw malignant light upon his darkness.

Unless Jim got out of this scrape he would assuredly be sent down. A big blot, this, on the record of the Penns. He was reminded grimly of that Sunday morning when they paced the cobbles side by side, and of Jim's voice urging awkwardly that he must "jolly well look after the honour of the family." Ironical, he was reflecting, if Jim turned out the first to tarnish it! Old Jim, the straightest fellow breathing!

And the second fixed idea was this: Suppose he failed to manage Rope, and allowed the whole scandal to get abroad, and with it the fact that the chief sinner was a boy at Kellcaster? How would he stand then?

Penn began to search for the answer as methodically and precisely as he would have set about a geometrical problem. He took a blue pencil, a black one, and a sheet of paper.

"*Imprimis*," he jotted down, "I'm captain. Unless I had been captain I would never have discovered Rope's identity." He scrutinised this. "No; there's no flaw there," he murmured.

"Very well," His pencil was busy again. "By a fluke, and only because I happen to be skipper, I've got the means of saving Jim —"

He paused with a quick frown. Then in blue, and very firmly, he scored the last words out. "No, Jim doesn't come in yet," he said. "Put the school down before Jim."

"The school?" he jotted, twice. "The school?" And after five minutes' cogitation he followed it with this:—

Fluke or no fluke, Dennis Penn holds the means of straightening this mess up so far as the school comes in. If he doesn't, he's mucked it up. If he mucks it up, he'll be responsible for the damage done to Kellcaster.

He cocked his head askew and read this. "Any flaw?" he growled.

"No; no flaw," he said at last, vindictively. "No beastly flaw that *I* can see."

Then he took the blue pencil, and drew two thick circles round all of it. Yes, unless he rose to the occasion the last of all the Penns would

let old Kellcaster down. The honour of the school was in his hands.

"Oh, hang my luck!" growled Penn.

CHAPTER XIX

"UP TO" PENN

"WELL," Penn was beginning. "How are we going to do it, Rope?"

It was after breakfast the next day, and he was prepared this morning to smooth the way for Rope. His tone was as cordial as he could make it.

In Rope's answer there was a subtle difference also. He seemed much less aggressive, as if he were taking a grip upon himself. His voice was not so sharp when he replied.

"Say! I want to have it bang plain where we stand. If your brother's shown up to the tutor, you think they'll fire him and disgrace your family? You're keen upon your family honour, Penn?"

Penn nodded.

"Say! Assuming it leaked out that the chap who let the gee down and ran away was a boy now at Kellcaster—would that hurt the school, Penn?"

"It might."

"Assume that all about that chap leaked out. How he had been fired from Princeton before he went to Cambridge; how when Cambridge was too hot to hold him he found shelter in an English public school. Assume the *Daily World* had those tit-bits to publish. Would that do Kellcaster any good, Penn?"

"It would be a very bad advertisement," Penn answered, slowly, reminded of what Pater Bovo had admitted.

"And a blow to old man Bullock, eh?"

Penn nodded for the second time.

"Then you can't force me to show myself. And that's a cinch, Penn."

Penn was utterly astonished. He had expected some fiery pleading when Rope first came in. He had been prepared while they spoke for sensible submission. But this attitude struck him with the shock of a sudden blow. He wondered if his ears had played him tricks?

"Say that again," he bade.

"You can't force me to show myself. I've beaten you!"

"Oh, can't I?" Penn cried, hotly.

"You can't," Rope answered, edging towards the table. "If you show me up, I show up Kellcaster. See here, Penn, When I asked you yesterday for time I wanted it for my sake, not for yours. I wanted it just badly, to dope out the easiest course. Well, I've doped it out. Though I don't say I'd have done it if you hadn't swished me that day. You've got to leave your brother to find his own way out, or else you've got to bring disgrace upon the school. You see?"

"I don't," Penn answered, slowly.

"You've got to choose between your brother and the school. You take your choice. It's all the same to me."

"I think not," Penn said, queerly. "I think it would make a great difference to you, Rope."

Rope leaned against the table, biting the knuckle of his forefinger as he watched Penn's face.

"Physically—yes, it might," he laughed. "You can thrash me—oh, of course, you can. You can fire me from here, but that would suit my book. But whether your brother or Kellcaster comes down I don't care one bunch of little daisies. Of course I don't. Why should I?"

"You haven't explained yet——"

"The way I've doped it, Penn? Oh, no. I want first to ram my point into your noddle. It's up to you to show me up and bust the school, or"—Rope paused biting his knuckle as he eyed Penn warily—"or to keep your mouth shut. If you show me up you bust the school; if you keep your mouth shut you bring your brother down. I don't care one rap which you do. But it's school or family, sonnie! Take your choice."

"Why?"

"Because I've fixed it, man. The instant you either report me to the Head or tell Pepperdine where I am, slick goes the whole story to the *Daily World*."

"You're talking rubbish," was Penn's reply.

"I'm telling you the truth. How Kellcaster took an undesirable and rechristened him—the risk to which his schoolfellows, dear innocents, were exposed—and all the rest of it! They'll have the whole thing in the *Daily World!*"

"How can they?"

"Because I've written them!"

"You've written them?"

"I have so," said Rope, emphatically. "But you've this chance: The letter hasn't gone yet—no, you'll never find it, Penn—but when I give the word, it goes!"

It was impossible to conclude that Rope was bluffing. His calmness, his altered manner, his cool intensity were all explained at last. He had come into the study with the trump card up his sleeve. And now he had just played it,

"And catch on," he was crying, "that it doesn't matter to me. Please yourself, Penn. *I* don't care."

It was just the certainty that Rope did *not* care which made his position impregnable, and Penn's so difficult. Penn saw that at once. Rope was just the sort of fellow, he sensed, to send that letter, for he was indifferent whether he stayed at Kellcaster or went, he was indifferent to the school's good name, he was attached there by no links of affection or tradition, and he was burning to avenge on it the humiliation of that never-forgotten thrashing.

But Penn did not mean the other to read his thoughts.

"Rope," he said, quietly, "do you think I swallow that yarn?"

"About my letter?"

"Yes—your letter!" laughed Penn.

"Oh, please yourself. I don't care what you do."

Penn weighed this thoughtfully. If he treated Rope's threat as a bluff he might bring everything crashing down at once. While if he took it seriously——

He moved to the door, as a bell began to ring.

"Rope," he said, "it's a blackguardly thing you've done. In the long run you'll be sorry for it."

"And meanwhile?"

"Meanwhile, don't post that letter, and I'll hold my hand. That a bargain?"

"Fair and square," said Rope.

"Very well. But I tell you this, Rope," And at last Penn's voice was rising. "If it comes to a fight between us—I'll beat you. Sure."

"You try."

"I'm going to," Penn answered.

But when he sat down that afternoon to thrash it out, the more he studied it the less he liked it. It became horribly obvious that on no account whatever must Rope's letter be suffered to reach the *Daily World*. Rather than that, old Jim must go overboard. It wouldn't be playing the game to sacrifice the school for Jim's sake.

One instant the wild idea occurred to him of searching Rope, of searching everyone and everywhere in Kellcaster, till he found the letter and destroyed it. Next instant he laughed. How mad the idea was! He couldn't cage and ward and watch Rope. Rope could always write his letter over again. And that time he'd make sure of posting it.

But, of course—he could go to Pater Bovo. Oh, yes, he could save Jim by going to Pater Bovo. There was no doubt how Pater Bovo would respond.

What fires would leap into those undimmed eyes of his, while he listened to the story of Rope's treachery! How he would declare upon the spot for the "straight thing." The straight thing! An expression Kellcaster will never forget.

But the "straight thing" for Pater Bovo was not the straight thing for himself. For Pater Bovo, the straight thing was to save Jim at the school's expense. For himself it was to save the school—at Jim's.

Then how dare he seek the Head and take him into counsel? He knew already what Pater Bovo would reply.

"Of course," he fancied Pater Bovo saying, "it makes a crux of it for you, Penn. But I am not a Penn. I am only the head master of this school, and I have merely to remember that one of my boys has been bilking a tradesman. I must send him off to make amends to Pepperdine."

"But, sir! His letter to the paper!" Penn imagined himself protesting.

And then he pictured the cloud on Pater Bovo's brow, and the reply, so uncompromising, so sure—so fierce.

"Boy, we can compromise with details, but not with principles. Never compromise with principles or pander to a consequence. If you see your duty, take it."

No, he decided, it would never do to go to Pater Bovo. Not if the honour of the school was to be saved——

"A telegram for you, sir!"

It was the sergeant standing stiffly at his elbow.

Penn took it with a queer start of alarm. The telegram could only be from Jim. Bad news?

Expecting you week-end for exam. Have taken rooms Petty Cury for you. Did you get my letter yesterday? Have seen P. His ultimatum. Will report certain to T. unless I find S., or meet bill. Haven't a sou.

"Well, he *can* blue it on telegrams, anyhow," Penn exclaimed, his sense of humour coming to his relief. Then he read the telegram through again.

Yes: its clipped sentences were clear enough—only too clear. Jim couldn't meet the bill, and Pepperdine was going off to the tutor unless he produced Spalding.

Well—there was nothing for it. For himself,

to go back on his decision was impossible. For Jim—*he'd* got to grin and bear it.

While his thoughts ran in this bitter fashion Penn had been fingering abstractedly his confidant, the lexicon. And all at once his eyes fell on some words scribbled on the margin of a page. They were scribbled in pencil, rather badly, and he bent his head to decipher them :—

A man is bigger than anything he makes.

Now why had he written that, and when? Of course—Pater Bovo had said it in a sermon last term. He remembered rushing straight back after chapel to write it down.

Penn sprang to his feet, and repeated the words aloud.

"A man is bigger than anything he makes! By Jove! Then Jim and I are bigger than this bother!"

His thoughts began to surge. What was it Pater Bovo had said next?

If he makes trouble he ought to be able to overcome it.

Yes—and if Jim and he were bigger than their trouble they could not possibly be beaten after all!

Hugging his head between his hands, Penn sat down again in a brown study. It was half an hour before he stirred, when he raised his lexicon and slapped it on the table. "Bigger," he muttered, "than anything he makes! By Jove! I'll do Rope yet."

Up he jumped; and, destroying his brother's telegram, scribbled a few lines in answer, with which he bolted to the sergeant's lodge.

See you as early as possible Friday. Do nothing till we meet.

"Cutlack, you can 'phone that down to the town, and have it wired at once?"

"At once, sir," the sergeant assented, moving promptly to the telephone.

"And, Cutlack. The school doesn't know I'm going to Cambridge to-morrow. You won't, of course, inform them?"

"Sir!"

The monosyllable was ejected with such force of injured dignity that Penn felt suitably rebuked. But he laughed, and his blue eyes shining with the light of battle, strode off to Musgrave's study, where he found Staples on the table, swinging his long legs. His greeting astonished them considerably.

"It's half-past five,' said he, with a brisk nod. "Before you fellows go in to tea at half-past six I want you two to do a job for me—to shadow Rope."

"To what?" the two exclaimed as one.

"To keep your eyes on Rope."

The very name of Rope to Staples was like a red rag to a bull.

"Rope!" he echoed, savagely. "Say the word, Penn, and I'll drop something heavier than my eye on Rope. My aunt I will!"

"Not yet," laughed Penn. "Now listen. When I leave you I'm going to haul Rope. He'll be in my study only a few minutes. When I come out I shall go to Pater Bovo. When Rope comes out——"

"We slaughter him?" cried Staples.

"Not a bit of it. All you do is to keep an eye on him right up to tea-time, watch everything he does; but don't let him notice that you're spotting him."

Musgrave raised his head from the empty cup he had been seemingly absorbed with.

"One minute, Penn," he uttered, coldly, "Staples can do that by himself. I'm not on to—play detective."

Penn divined that his old friend resented his apparent lack of candour, but there was no time now for sentiment or explanation.

"I want you to, please, Musgrave," he replied authoritatively. "You have my word for it the reason's good."

"In that case, of course——" said Musgrave.

"I knew you would. And your part comes in here. If Rope confabs particularly with anyone, you must shadow that other fellow. See all he does. But don't interfere with it."

"And I can't interfere with Rope?" growled Staples.

"No, Staples. On no account. For instance, even if he should slip out and skip off to that letter-box outside the gates, you let him go, Staples."

"What—let him go?"

"Exactly. Don't stop him. Let him go."

"And when he comes back, slay him?" gloated Staples.

"No. He mustn't know you've spotted him Give him his head—don't let him know—and tell me afterwards. Got it clearly, both of you?"

His question embraced both, but his eyes were turned to Musgrave.

"All right," the latter said, "as you're so keen on it."

On his way back to his study Penn sighted two small, grey-flannelled figures scuttling ahead. Although he could not see their faces,

their forms seemed cheerfully familiar, and his lips were smiling as he hailed them. But he was surprised at the alacrity with which the Persian Lambs responded, and at the way they beamed on him.

"Find Rope and send him to my study," he commanded. "Straight away."

They were off like twin arrows from one bow, and theirs was an unholy joy two minutes later to track Rope to the library and give their message. For their hearts were still a little sore with him.

He had the room to himself, and was seated at the table at the far end before a pretentious pile of books. However, he did not appear to be bestowing his attention on his books, but rather on a sheet of paper (before which the pile made a rampart) covered with his neat and peculiarly formed writing. From the smile that played about his lips, the contents of the paper seemed to please him; and so intent was he upon it that his visitors were almost at his side before he looked up. Then he snatched very hurriedly an envelope already addressed, and thrust this and the paper into his breast pocket.

"Sonnies, you startled me!" he cried. "Now chase yourselves. I'm busy!"

"Penn wants you," they responded, blandly. "You've to go at once, Rope."

"Oh, chase yourselves, I tell you."

"Penn wants you, Rope."

He eyed them in astonishment. Was this the way his Birds of Freedom should address their P. and F.? But his voice was quite good-natured when he spoke again.

"You're very keen on Penn all of a sudden, eh?" he drawled.

"We back Penn up," said Gage and Ellis, grandly.

Unwelcome as the summons was, Rope aped indifference when he was standing before Penn.

"Yes," he said. "You want me?"

"Only to tell you this," Penn answered, slowly. "The truce is off. I've made my mind up what I'm going to do."

"What's that?'

"That's my business!" snapped Penn. "Rope, I'm just off now to Pater Bovo."

"Then I shall post my letter."

"You'll do as you like."

Rope sneered, showing his white teeth.

"You go, Penn, and won't Kellcaster repent it?"

"Good-bye," Penn answered, cheerfully. "I'm off."

And to Rope's utter astonishment he went, and left him free. Free to tip-toe after as soon as Penn was in the corridor, to watch him stride across the quad, and pass under the ivied archway. Springing in pursuit, he was just in time to see Penn's back and shoulders as the folding doors which led into the Head's private house swung heavily behind them.

"He's gone!" Rope muttered. "The josser! Well, he's asked for it!"

His coat was buttoned, and his fingers went unconsciously to the outside of his breast-pocket, feeling something that reposed inside; assuring himself, perhaps, that it was there. Then he shot off hastily.

He had been taken by surprise when Penn declared his intention of going, letter or no letter, to the Head. He would have been more surprised if he had been able to follow Penn to his journey's end, and to overhear the conversation which passed between the two.

Said Penn: "Sir, about my going to Cambridge to-morrow. May I leave the first thing in the morning?"

"Ah—Cambridge—yes, your scholarship," mused Pater Bovo, very busy tackling correspondence. "You want to go to-morrow morning, eh?"

"If you please, sir."

"Well, why not, Penn? Why, certainly. Your brother's got you rooms?"

"In the Petty Cury, sir."

"Ah! Don't sit up too late with him on Friday night; remember, the exam. begins at nine o'clock on Saturday. I look to you to bring that scholarship home."

He dipped his quill, and Penn turned at the hint.

"Before you go, Penn. You've followed those foolish letters in the paper? You saw the one from a Cambridge stable person? You read the leader?"

"Yes, sir," Penn said, steadily.

"I wonder what school the boy who let the horse down came from? I'm glad it wasn't Kellcaster, at any rate. But it all convinces me more than ever of our wisdom in conducting the Spalding experiment with—ah—discretion. What a case that paper would make if it knew we had a Princeton renegade here!" The old gentleman was chuckling. "Dear, dear, poor creatures! Can't you see them raising their shocked hands? It would hurt us, I'm afraid, with thoughtless folk." He paused, concluding gently, "They would never glimpse the real way of it, Dennis."

As he waited by the door with slightly averted face, Penn was glad that Pater Bovo was not

looking fully at him. He shook the hand extended, and departed.

"Good luck!" called Pater Bovo after him.

It was to be expected that at once now he would stride back through the swing doors. There was no other exit from *the* study into the school precincts.

But, astonishingly, he did nothing of the sort. When a glance at his watch had informed him that it was only ten minutes to six, he proceeded down the passage till he reached a darker turning on the right, into which he wheeled abruptly. A moment later, in violation of the laws of all the Medes and Persians, the captain of the school was actually creeping into the little pantry devoted to the venerable Parker!

That ancient almost dropped the glass he was polishing at the sight of him.

"Sir!" he expostulated. "You of all people, Mr. Penn!"

"I know," Penn answered, as he softly closed the door. "But I'm going to break a rule for once. Don't you worry, Parker. I've not come to talk to you."

"But, sir——"

"Be quiet, you old rip! Get on with it."

So the venerable one "got on with it," while his trespasser watched him silently for half an hour, when he smiled at Parker, and stole out as noiselessly as he had entered. A few swift paces bore him back through the swing doors. In ten minutes the bell would ring for tea.

Anyone who had marked him going into Pater Bovo's some forty minutes earlier, and who now saw him coming out again, must have judged him just returning from the Head. Rope, for instance, if he had been watching, could have drawn no other conclusion. And this was possibly what Penn intended.

It was after tea, when the bell had rung for prep, that Musgrave and Staples showed themselves.

"Penn," said Staples, "Rope slipped off to the pillar-box in the high road, as you seemed to think he might. He was back in half a jiffy, and then he set that Parsons kid to watch the Head's doors. At last I spotted Parsons bolting to his study——"

"When was that, Staples?"

"About ten minutes before tea, Penn."

"You didn't interfere with them?"

"I did *not*," said Staples, with a curious inflection. "If I had done——"

CHAPTER XX

"VI ET ARMIS"

THE several clocks in Fleet Street were indicating 2 p.m. next day, when a man emerged from the Press Club, where he had been lunching, and dodging one or two motor-'buses and a few taxi-cabs, arrived safely on the other side of the road. But his movements, although agile, had been dignified, as befitted a person of such importance as the Assistant News Editor of the *Daily World*.

He was a young man with sandy features and pugnacious jaw, and he regarded the world through spectacles because they added to his years and detracted nothing worth counting from his vision. He was a man, however, with a grievance.

It galled him to reflect that whereas the Editor, the Foreign Editor, the News Editor, and other potentates were not required to present themselves till later in the afternoon, he must come on duty as the clock struck two. That this placed him temporarily in charge provided no solatium to his feelings.

In his room he removed his spectacles and coat, lighted a cigarette, tilted his chair back, put his feet upon the table, and prayed that no supererogative reporters would disturb him for an hour yet. He had lunched well, and he felt sleepy.

His head was beginning to nod with those spasmodic jerks which manifest the coming nap, when a rap upon the door was followed by the appearance of a squat commissionaire, who presented a slip of paper, which Mr. Green, his feet still upon the table, took languidly.

"I don't know the name," he said.

The commissionaire was Irish, and laconic.

"Sorr, he wants the editor," he rumbled.

"You told him the editor would not be here till six?"

"Sorr, he said he'd wait."

"You told him the editor was unlikely, anyhow, to see him?"

"Sorr, it's phwat I'm afther telling him."

Mr. Green was very nearly startled into an orthodox posture. The idea of any individual being prepared to spend four hours of a glorious afternoon in the vestibule below *was* startling. It could occur, he thought, to nobody but one of those eccentrics who pester newspapers.

"Mike, what's he like? Does he look as if he had a screw loose? Wearing a velvet coat?"

"Sorr, he's loike any ordinary young gent."

"Ah," sighed Mr. Green. "Then let him wait, Mike. He'll soon grow tired."

THE LAST OF HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

A placid interval followed before the great building began to stir to life, the hive to hum again, and routine's well-oiled wheels to move for to-morrow's launch of another issue of the *Daily World*. And as the first daisy tells of spring, so Mr. Green's herald of the dawn of labour was always the appearance of his subordinate. This was Mr. Weeks, an irreverent creature who respected nobody.

Said he, as he slapped down a bundle of correspondence on the table, "Say, Green! Down below there's a perisher sitting like a statue. Mike tells me he's been waiting since two o'clock!"

"Still there!" smiled Mr. Green. "He's waiting for the chief."

"A bit rough on him—what? Does he suppose the chief will see him?"

"Oh, he likes sitting there!" laughed Mr. Green, as, brisk at last, he began examining the letters Weeks had brought.

"But why not tell him the chief will never see him? Couldn't you see him, Green?"

"I've been too busy," was the emphatic reply. Whereat the other laughed outright.

One by one, Mr. Green was glancing through the letters, with a sweep of blue pencil for the greater number before he flicked them into the large waste-paper basket beside him. A few he placed beneath a paper-weight for further consideration. But suddenly he came upon one which brought a little exclamation to his lips. He read it through a second time, initialed it, and looked at Weeks alertly.

"Good biz!" he cried. "Here's the culprit in that horse scandal—you remember, Weeks?—writing to own up, and declaring he's a boy at Kellcaster——"

"At Kellcaster! A boy there!"

"By Jove! yes. But more, he was kicked out of Princeton University first, and hoofed away from Cambridge. A nut, Weeks! Wonder if the letter's genuine!"

"The chief will publish it?"

"Sure! It's one to us. As soon as he comes I'll send it in to him. By Jove! we have them on the hip!"

"Better make sure it's *bona fide* first."

"Look out!" cried the newspaper man, but too late, for Penn had sprung forward, seized the letter, and now began tearing it to pieces.

"Of course," Mr. Green retorted, stiffly.

"Well, how can you?"

"Leave that to me."

But Mr. Green, for all his self-assurance, had no idea at present how he could make sure.

Providence, however, seemed coming to assist him. For when the hive was humming at its full, and the two had been busy for some time, a page-boy in the paper's uniform appeared.

"If you please, Mr. Green," said he, "Mr. Mike says it's half-past six, and will you see the gentleman down below?"

"What gentleman?"

"Him that's been waiting since two o'clock, sir. His name's been taken to the chief."

"He's come, then?"

"Twenty minutes ago, sir. But he can't see the gentleman, and he won't go till he's seen someone."

"Still there!" the two exclaimed together.

"Yes, sir. He won't go."

"Then send him up," snapped Mr. Green.

A tall youth, with blue eyes and remarkably square shoulders, was ushered in a moment later. Mr. Green's manner became large and self-important.

"Your name?" he asked.

"My name is Penn. I've waited almost five hours to see the editor. Are you the editor?"

"Boys," said Mr. Green, "are not seen by the editor. Well, what's your business?"

"I come from Kellcaster. Quite unofficially, you understand."

"From where?" Mr. Green glanced quickly at his assistant. "I told you I would verify that letter," the glance said.

"From Kellcaster School. One of the boys there has written to your paper——"

"Name of Spalding, eh?"

"Yes, a boy called Spalding."

"Just so," Mr. Green's air was suddenly sympathetic. "Yes, I've got the letter here. He was at Princeton, in America, he says. Also at Cambridge. Expelled from both. He let that Pepperdine person's horse down. All a pack of lies, is it?"

"I have not said so," Penn answered, quietly.

"Well, isn't it reliable?"

"I don't say——"

"Quick! Isn't it true—is he stating fact? Is he really a boy at Kellcaster?"

"He is," said Penn.

"Well, now." Mr. Green leaned forward, his tone persuasive and inviting. "Is all he says correct? I ask you as a gentleman, Mr. Penn?"

"If you press it," Penn said, steadily, "it is correct."

"Then what," came the quick retort, "do *you* want?"

This abrupt change of voice and manner surprised Penn, but he eyed the other steadily before replying:—

"What do I want? I want you to suppress the letter?"

"Say that again," demanded Mr. Green.

"I ask you not to publish it."

Mr. Green had extracted all he wanted. Now he rose indignantly.

"What in thunder do you mean," he drawled, "by coming here and dictating what this paper shall publish and what it shan't? When we need your valuable assistance we'll ask for it. See?" He thumped his hand, and snatched Rope's letter up. "See? Here it is, my bantam! To-morrow you can read it in the paper. Now get out!"

Penn had been standing stiffly a few paces off, but no sooner did he catch sight of Rope's neat writing than he moved a little away from Weeks and a little nearer Green.

"Oh, that is the letter?" he asked, quietly.

"Yes," was the answer, with another flourish; "it is. I suppose you know the writing?"

Penn advanced another pace. "It seems authentic," he remarked. He laughed queerly.

"Look out!"

The cry came from Weeks, but it came a second too late. For Penn had sprung forward as he laughed, and, grasping Mr. Green's wrist with the genuine Kellcaster twist with one hand, with the other he snatched the letter from him. Then he leaped back, facing them, tearing at his prize.

"Now publish it!" laughed he. "Now publish it!"

"Quick! Collar him!" Green cried.

They rushed at him together. A right-hander planted squarely on Green's chest sent that important young gentleman spinning, and Weeks, leaping at Penn's shoulder, was hurled beside him.

"Now publish it!" Penn cried to them again.

To their astonishment, he made no attempt to run away, but remained with his back against the door, his legs apart, intent only on tearing Rope's letter into fragments. And as they picked themselves up, and gathered for a fresh attack, he thrust the fragments into his pocket, and stooped to meet their charge. Weeks feinted, ducked, and gripped him round the knees.

"Now, pull him down!" he gasped. "Now, Green!"

A fine *mêlée* followed. Like a boar between

the hounds, Penn swayed and struggled and strove. Unwilling to damage them, he would not use his fists; but, though gradually they bore him from his vantage by the door, he baffled all their efforts to get at his pocket. They had forced him to the table and were pinning him against it, when it gave beneath their weight, and in the crash the door was suddenly flung open, and a sharp voice bade them stop.

Green and Weeks rose surlily, brushing the dust off, and obviously embarrassed.

The new comer was a little man, with a bald head and very tired features.

"Mr. Green," he said, "what is the matter?"

With as much dignity as a torn coat and ragged collar allowed, the assistant news editor proceeded to explain.

"Have you recovered the letter?" he was asked, when he had finished.

"It's in pieces," was the sour confession.

The little man turned wearily, and perhaps he thought it significant that Penn had not opened his mouth yet.

"You are the person who has been attempting to see me," he remarked.

And then Penn understood why his late adversaries looked so shamefaced. This little, bald-headed gentleman was the editor himself, the august being he had striven so hard to see.

"Though I've waited five hours, sir, to see you," he answered, with a flicker of a smile, "I did not mean to introduce myself in this fashion."

The editor's eyes seemed suddenly alight. He regarded Penn more shrewdly.

"Ah," he answered; "then come into my room."

Without another word to his confused subordinates, the little gentleman departed, Penn following at his heels. But when the door was closed upon them in his own room, the editor's air of weariness forsook him; he became alert, aggressive; he began to speak incisively.

"Sit down," he bade. "You know that I could give you in charge for this?"

"I'm afraid so," Penn replied.

"You have assaulted my staff. You have stolen my paper's property."

"Not wittingly."

"And you should know, Mr. Penn, that if I publish in my paper a narrative of your violent and outrageous theft, you will have done a worse day's work than you imagine. Now, what do you say to that?"

"I've this to say, sir"—Penn was weighing every word—"if you publish what I've done it must cut both ways. The story of a schoolboy besting two of your editorial staff may seem good 'copy,' as I think you call it, to your rivals."

"Ah!" The editor's monosy llable was reflective. He clasped his hands together, and gazed at Penn beneath his brows.

"Ah!" he repeated. "Ah!"

And then, to Penn's astonishment, he rose, and put his hand upon his shoulder.

"Boy," he said, "tell me what the matter is? In confidence, between you and me."

Something told Penn that his chance had come at last. Slowly, and quite frankly, he recounted the whole story. And every now and then the editor interjected a shrewd question, or punctuated some point with his long, reflective "Ah!" And Penn, while he was speaking, grew conscious of a difference in the atmosphere between them. It had been threatening—it now seemed kindlier.

"Yes; it was your brother or your school," said the editor at last. "So you laid your trap for this Rope fellow, led him to believe you were off to your head master to expose him, enticed him into posting his letter, and determined to chance all by drawing his teeth in Fleet Street. Boy, you ran a tremendous risk."

"It's jolly good of you, sir," Penn cried, for the bald little gentleman was smiling.

"It is," was the dry answer; "but I've got a boy at home of your age."

"You're an arbitrary individual, you know, Penn," the other went on presently, "and your methods of dealing with the Press are a little too Wild-West-ish. But your school seems to have taught you courage and independence, a point which my correspondents may have overlooked. Well, I can trust you to say nothing of to-night's work, and I dare say we shall have no more leading articles. I think our readers are growing tired of the correspondence."

"Sir, it's awfully good of you," repeated Penn;

"So you said before. I quite agree." The editor's smile was broad at last; his manner very brisk. "And now, Penn, how about that bother of your brother's?"

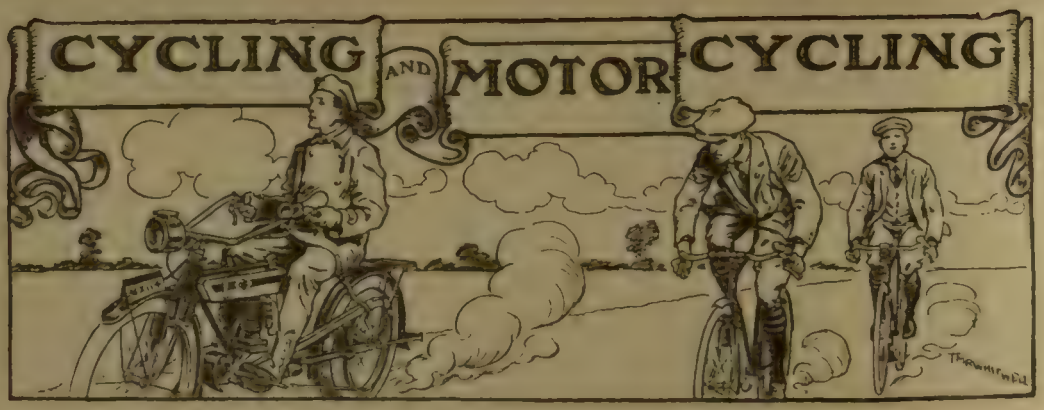
"Now the school's safe, sir, we can settle that. Now that Pepperdine and Rope can't hurt the school, Jim will have to make a clean breast of it to his tutor."

"But that means rustication?"

"I'm afraid so, sir," sighed Penn.

"Ah, well. Perhaps you and I, Penn, can hit on something yet."

(To be concluded.)



By ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

Editor of "Engineering Wonders of the World." Author of "How it Works," etc.

A LONG RIDE

A FEW weeks ago I had to travel from a point near London to a village—which I will call X—in Carnarvonshire, 260 odd miles away. After consulting the map and making inquiries about the road, I decided to travel in my motor-car, dividing the journey into two parts by staying the night at Shrewsbury. Two hundred and sixty miles, including a hundred through hilly Wales, seemed too large an order for one day. I started at 7 a.m.—being delayed at the last minute, as is usual on such occasions, by small matters which cannot be foreseen—and about five minutes later ran into a rain-storm. Prudence said, "Turn back!" Pride said, "Stick to it!" So I stuck, and presently was rewarded by the rain ceasing, after it had done nothing much beyond laying the dust, for which I was thankful.

Plugging along steadily at twenty miles an hour (or possibly more), I passed Chipping Norton, Evesham, Worcester, Kidderminster, and Bridgnorth, and soon after two o'clock found myself in Shrewsbury. The country was at its best, which is saying a good deal when referring to some of our most beautiful counties. The fly in the ointment, from a motorist's point of view, was the number of cattle which had chosen this particular day for going to market, and almost had to be pushed out of the way.

Now, on realising that I had still six hours of good daylight in hand, I said to myself, "Courage, Archibald, and you shall sleep this night at Bettws-y-coed." After a frugal repast I started up again, and jogged along through Chirk, on the Welsh frontier, and Llangollen to Corwen, whence to Bettws the road was said to be in a condition which reduced motors to walking speed. However, things were not so bad as reported, and though the traction engines employed on local water-works had damaged the surface considerably; I was able to do fifteen miles an hour without loosening any teeth. On the high, desolate moor near Cerrig-y-Druidion rain overtook me again, and remained with me till I was on the down grade to Bettws. Then the sun came out and, shining on the fresh green dripping foliage of the wood, gave me a series of most enchanting views as I slipped down the twisting hill with clutch out. Surely Bettws in early summer is one of the most enchanting spots in our islands!

It was now half-past five. Said I to myself, "Push on to Beddgelert, stay the night there, and get to X early to-morrow morning." So the engine had to labour up the long hill to Capel Curig, where I turned to the left into the Beddgelert road, which meanders through wild and very lovely scenery. The surface on this stretch is rather bumpy though not loose, but the road twists so much and is so up and down that one has to go carefully. It is annoying that in the most picturesque districts the driver should have to pay strictest attention to the business of driving, and have little time for admiring his surroundings. Yet so it is, so far as my own experience goes, and I often wish that I were a passenger with nothing to do but look about when interested and to nod when bored.

Did I stop at Beddgelert? Not a bit of it! Though rain had made the roads greasy I determined to see the journey through before I switched off for the day, and to break my own modest records handsomely. Down we slid to Tremadoc, from Tremadoc we bumped to Criccieth, from Criccieth we fared over darkening roads to Pwllheli, where the electric lamps were switched on. The remainder of the trip was accomplished at a sober pace, the road being somewhat obstructed by folk returning from a *fête* at Pwllheli. Nine o'clock was striking as I pulled up at my destination, very dusty, rather tired, and decidedly pleased with myself and my motor. Two hundred and

sixty miles in fourteen hours—not bad. Wasn't I tired next day, too! Not the silkiest of Rolls Royces would have charmed me from the easy chair wherein I followed again the details of that very pleasant, if uneventful, drive.

HOLIDAYS IN NORTH WALES

After a month in North Wales I feel that it is an ideal district for holiday-makers, especially those owning cycles and motors. From Llangollen westwards is glorious country, whereof Snowdon is the pride. Ascend Snowdon from Llanberis on the cogwheel railway if you like, but come down on the Beddgelert side and walk right down to Portmadoc. From Beddgelert to the little port is simply delightful, with its peeps of mountains and gorse-yellowed flats. A journey from Portmadoc to Festiniog and back on the two-foot-gauge railway is also a pleasant experience, as this twisty little track takes one right into the heart of the hills through very fine scenery. Of course there are many mountains other than Snowdon worthy of attack; wherever you may be in North Wales there will be a respectable hill in the neighbourhood. If you are a fisherman, you should not lack chances of trout in the many streams over which anyone may cast a fly; if a keen golfer, links will be available. But when you project cycle tours, don't put the day's mileage too high, as the hills are steep and long.

CAMPING IN THE NEW FOREST

The test of the enjoyment of a holiday is surely the persistence with which memories of that holiday remain with one. Judged by this standard, I place a high value on a few days spent in camping in the New Forest during July of last year. We were favoured by glorious weather, and an extremely comfortable pitch in the premises of one of the foresters. (*Note:* It doesn't do to pitch camp anywhere, as the forest is a favourite haunt of many gipsies, who are not to be trusted in the neighbourhood of the belongings of absent campers, and at any time may be a nuisance.)

Making our tent our "centre," we rambled delightfully afoot in the Forest itself, bathed in a handy stream, made excursions to Lymington, Christchurch, Bournemouth, and the Isle of Wight, all within reasonable distance. Lyndhurst was our shopping point—quite good shops for so small a place. Lovers of birds will find plenty to amuse them in the swarms of wood pigeons which make the woods resound with their cooing in the early morning, and the nightjars which churr ceaselessly towards and after nightfall. It takes some craft to stalk a nightjar, for its own noise doesn't prevent it hearing the snap of the smallest twig under foot.

The cost of camping is ridiculously small, considering what one gets out of it. But do not spare pains about preparing a comfortable couch. More valuable than hay and straw is a depression scooped or hammered in the ground where the hip-bone is to come. Hay and such things—unless very thick—flatten down under one's weight until one feels the hard ground beneath. Then it is that the aforesaid hollow proves its worth, for a hip-bone that carries half one's weight prevents sleep. Also, take an electric torch with you. It is invaluable for hunting pigs, cows, horses, and other nightly intruders out of the precincts.

The camper's outfit should certainly include a packet of Quaker or other rolled oats, for making porridge for breakfast while the tent is being brailed up and tidied for the day. A good plateful of porridge reconciles one to the absence of a sumptuous bill of fare. In the evening try hasty pudding, which is prepared in a few minutes by dropping flour into boiling milk and stirring—much, if you like the pudding smooth; little, if you prefer it lumpy. Taken with treacle, "hasty" is very palatable as well as "filling."

Not a nightmare, but certainly a camper's *bête noire!*

LIGHT IN THE TENT

Before you go a-camping rig up some means of fixing a candle or lantern to a tent-pole, where it will be out of the way and able to throw a general light. If the illuminant has to be placed on the ground, it will be very inefficient, except for distributing grease or oil. A few minutes manœuvring with stout wire should provide a hook or stand suitable

for the purpose; and when you get to camp you will bless yourself for your foresight. (*Mem.:* Close the tent doors before lighting up, or you will have every moth and flying insect in the neighbourhood paying unwelcome visits. In mosquito-ridden districts close the doors before dark, as these pests love to get inside during the evening and hang on the inside of the roof, waiting to pounce down on you when you retire for the night.)

GRIT IN THE COVER

Before removing a cover, wipe off any dirt adhering to the outside, lest it should fall into the cover and give trouble. A very tiny particle of stone is quite capable of making a puncture, the cause of which will not be apparent. If you find any dirt inside the cover, get this to the lowest point by tapping, and insert a moistened rag, to which it will adhere.

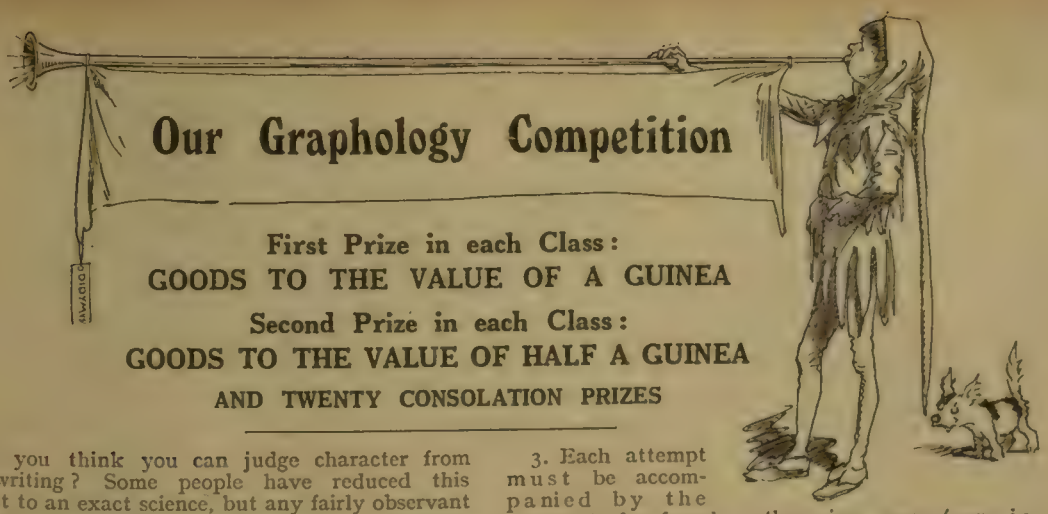
HEIGHT OF SADDLE AND HANDLE-BARS

Some time ago I had to hire a push-bike on several occasions. It was a bit too small in the frame for me, and, owing to the makers having cut off the saddle pillar and handle-bar stem rather short, I could not get the height of bars or saddle to suit my arms and legs. That cycle, though new, was a brute to propel, and seemed to have a ton or two of lead hidden away in it somewhere, to judge by the way it dragged on hills. A companion, who had hired a similar cycle of a large build, always ran away from me, so I presently suggested a swop of machines to discover whether bike or lack of "condition" was responsible for my always falling behind. The exchange gave me the upper hand at once; I could simply romp away from the other man when pedalling, though when coasting we kept level enough. The trouble was, as I expected, due merely to misfit, though the difference in height of machines was not great. To make sure, I lowered the saddle and bars of the bigger cycle, and found it also a bad goer under such conditions. Therefore, when hiring don't take the first thing offered, but pick out a machine on which you feel comfortable without having to adjust the parts to any great extent.

PRACTISING

In the days when cycling was the "rage," gymkhanas were rife and folk had plenty of chances of showing their skill as riders. Now that the cycle has become the customary means of getting about for those who don't own cars, one is satisfied with being able merely to mount, ride straight, and dismount with certainty. These abilities are, indeed, sufficient for ordinary use, but I don't suppose that one rider out of ten is really "master" of his or her machine. Just take your bike out on to a road, say, fourteen feet wide, and try circling first to right and then to left. If you can manage this, try mounting and dismounting on either side alternately. You will probably find that, quite unconsciously maybe, you have accustomed yourself to one-sided circling, mounting, and dismounting, and find it hard to carry through any of the operations on the other side. If this be the case, practise till you can use both sides with the same ease, as circumstances will arise sooner or later when complete mastery of the machine will get you out of a tight place.

A camping scene in the New Forest.



Our Graphology Competition

First Prize in each Class:
GOODS TO THE VALUE OF A GUINEA

Second Prize in each Class:
GOODS TO THE VALUE OF HALF A GUINEA

AND TWENTY CONSOLATION PRIZES

Do you think you can judge character from handwriting? Some people have reduced this almost to an exact science, but any fairly observant person can generally make at least a few deductions from any specimen of handwriting submitted to him.

On page 1037 you will find a slightly reduced facsimile of an interesting written announcement, and we want you to study this closely and see what conclusions you come to as to the character of the writer. Be honest; he is no particular friend of the Competition Editor, so do not think that sheer flattery will win the prizes.

RULES AND CONDITIONS

1. No attempt must exceed 200 words in length.
2. The name, address, and age of the competitor must be written above his attempt.
3. Each attempt must be accompanied by the coupon to be found on the prizes page (page iv.
4. Competitors will be divided into two classes as follows:—

Class I.—Competitors sixteen years of age and over.
Class II.—Competitors under sixteen.

5. Entries must be received not later than Thursday, August 20th, 1914, addressed to the Competition Editor, THE CAPTAIN, 8, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C., the word "Character" being written in the top left-hand corner of the envelope.
6. Winners of first and second prizes may select goods from the catalogue of any firm advertising in THE CAPTAIN.
7. The Editor's decision must be accepted as final.

Our Bicycle goes to Eastbourne

Result of the "Best Advertisements" Competition

THE competition we set Captainites in June proved one of the most popular we have had for some time. The number of entries was so large and the voting so level that the task of judging was by no means a simple one. Eventually it was found that the most correct list was sent in by—

P. L. JOB, St. Bede's School, Eastbourne,

who thus becomes the lucky winner of the splendid Rudge-Whitworth bicycle we offered as first prize.

The uniform excellence of our advertisements was clearly demonstrated by the very close nature of the voting. For a long time it was quite impossible to tell which would prove to be the foremost six, but in the end the order came thus: Fry's Chocolate, Messrs. Bassett-Lowke, Mackintosh's Toffee, Messrs. Gamage, Fluxite, and Rudge-Whitworth Cycles. Only by a very few votes did these prevail over H. Gradidge and Sons, John Piggott, Clark's College, H. Fitzpatrick, Quaker Oats, Humber, "Playwax," the Universal Electric Co., the Economic Electric Co., and Sharp's Kreemy Toffee. It was a very exciting contest indeed, and one which we shall repeat before very long.

THE SECOND PRIZE (a Camera) was won by CECIL INSALL, 30, Rue d'Auteuil, Paris; and the third (a Cricket Bat) by J. G. MILNER, Heverscroft, Oakhill Avenue, Hampstead, N.W.

"CAPTAIN" VOLUMES have been sent to the following: Harry Weekes, J. D. Odell, G. L. Still, I. Ecley, G. Thorn, J. Van Minden, R. Fabirez, Raymond Harper, L. Fletcher, J. B. Rose, Norman Gatey, Hugh Harrison, Rupert Mace, Christopher Brooke-Hunt, E. M. Wilkinson.

CONSOLATION PRIZES have been awarded to the following: W. P. Hawkins, Taunton; G. R. Braund, Ore; L. Knowles, Oldham; Geoffrey R. Twyman, Hornsey; Kenneth Alliston, Keston; F. L. Harrison, Grantham; George Halliwell, Willesden; S. Whitmore, Partington, Bury; John C. Mills, Forest Hill; Ian V. L. Gordon, Aberdeen; Fred J. Chapple, Jun., Old Trafford; Heber Siddons, Sheffield; H. H. Wilkinson, Hale; R. W. Taplin, Leytonstone; John R. Oddie, Pateley Bridge; P. J. C. Thornley, Warrington; Alexander Craig, Barrow-in-Furness; D. R. Lock, Bexhill-on-Sea; A. W. Jones, Bath; Reginald I. Croucher, Greenwich, Frederick F. Cooper, Langley Fort. B.C., Canada.

Third Party

By T. C. BRIDGES

THE fire in the rusty cast-iron stove was almost out, and the temperature in the scantily furnished living room was fast approaching freezing point; but the youngster who sat, pencil in hand, at the rough deal table was so intent on a sketch plan in front of him that he seemed not to notice the cold.

Suddenly the outer door opened, and a tall young fellow, with snowflakes glistening on his cap and coat, came striding in.

"What—no supper!" he exclaimed. "And the place like an ice box! Tony, you are too slack for anything."

"I'm sorry, Jack," said the other, looking up. "I was so busy over the plan that I didn't notice how late it was."

"What's the good of your rotten plans?" asked Jack Lytton, angrily, as he flung the stove door open and began piling in wood. "Much better if you'd been cooking supper instead of wasting time like that."

Antony West bit his lip to keep down a sharp retort. He put the plan aside, took out some potatoes from a pan, and began peeling them.

His silence seemed to make the other's temper worse.

"Still trying to prove your lost lead, I suppose?" he said, sneeringly.

Antony West coloured a little.

"Of course I am," he said, shortly. "I've told you all along that I feel sure we could strike the rich vein if we sunk a bit deeper."

"And wasted our money, when we've already found payable ore," retorted Jack.

"Payable ore!" repeated Antony. "Stuff you can just scratch a living out of."

"Better a living than nothing," answered Jack, holding his chilled hands over the reviving blaze.

Anthony West did not speak for a moment. Then he burst out quite suddenly:—

"I'm sick of this, Jack. For weeks past we've done nothing but bicker."

"Whose fault is that?" cut in Jack.

Antony shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, both, I suppose. Anyhow, I've had enough of it. I've a jolly good mind to clear out."

"What's to hinder you?" asked Jack, sourly.

"That's a nice way to talk. You know I've put everything I've got into this mine."

"That needn't worry you. I'll buy you out."

Antony started. To say he was surprised was putting it mildly. He was very well aware of the state of his partner's finances, and he knew that if Jack paid back what he, Antony, had put into the mine it would leave him almost penniless. Yet what he had said was true. He was sick of the constant arguing and quarrelling. His ideas and Jack's, as to working the mine, were totally different. He

himself believed that, by sinking deeper, they would strike richer ore; Jack Lytton was convinced that their best plan was to keep going on the same level where they had struck ore which, though poor in quality, did just pay.

What neither Antony nor Jack realised was the fact that the long cold winter during which they had been cooped up together in their little cabin on Barren Mountain—the hard, monotonous work, the bad fare, the lack of society and amusement, had got on the nerves of them both, and converted two very decent fellows into crusty, queer-tempered beggars who were always venting their ill-humour the one on the other.

For a moment Antony's better nature was uppermost. He was on the point of telling Jack that he was sorry, that he had not meant his hasty words. Then, glancing up, he saw the other's eyes fixed on him with a hard stare.

"All right," he said, curtly. "I'll quit. You can give me a cheque to-morrow, and I'll clear out."

"Very well," answered Jack shortly, and for the remainder of the evening, until they went to bed, the two hardly exchanged a word.

Next morning, when Antony woke, he found Jack already gone. A cheque drawn and signed lay on the table.

"Sulky beast!" growled Antony, as he pocketed the cheque. Then he made his breakfast, packed his things, and, when Jack came up the shaft for his mid-day meal, the shack was empty and deserted.

For some seconds Jack stared around the empty room, then he gave a long sigh.

"Serves me jolly well right," he muttered. "Well, it's done, and it can't be helped. All the same, I wish I'd said good-bye to him."

Spring was coming on, the days were lengthening. It still froze hard at night, but at mid-day the sun had power, and the snow was thinning. But Jack, busy all day below ground, saw little of the change of season. Each day he worked harder than the previous, for the vein seemed to be petering out, and a horrible fear was on him that it might pinch out altogether, in which case he would be utterly ruined. His last penny was sunk in this hole among the pine trees on the bleak side of Barren Mountain.

On and on Jack drove his tunnel, working with feverish energy. The line of the vein was still clear enough, but it had become terribly narrow. At night he would be so utterly weary that it was all he could do to force himself to light the fire and boil a cup of coffee. He missed Antony more every day, but was too proud to admit it. Now that prospects were so bad he would not for the world have gone to look for him, or summoned him back. Indeed, he did not know where Antony was, but rather fancied he had gone to live with old Beeton, a settler who farmed in the valley below.

Day after day Jack toiled, getting more and more gaunt and thin. He felt, too, at times that his strength was not what it had been, and this worried him badly.

It was on the sixteenth day after he and his partner had parted that Jack Lytton received the surprise of his life. Just before dinner-time he fired a pretty heavy blast. He did not go down again until after dinner in order to give plenty of time for the fumes of the dynamite to clear. Then, when he reached the heading, he stopped short with a gasp.

The light of his candle gleamed on a myriad of shining veins crossing and recrossing one another in a mass of dull grey rock. It was silver galena or lead glance, and one look served to assure him that his fortune was made.

For a moment he leaned against the side of the tunnel. His head was spinning, and he felt as though breathing were difficult. Then he pulled himself together, and drove his pick into the face of the treasure house.

Luck of this sort is difficult to keep secret, and although Jack did his best to keep his find quiet, yet he had to send his samples down to Vancouver for analysis; and the next thing he knew was an offer from a man named Bertram to buy the mine outright.

Jack curtly refused. He knew a good thing when he had got it, and meant to make the most of it. He made up his mind to go down country as soon as the weather permitted, get men and stores, and open up on a big scale.

One night, about a week later, he was wakened by a slight sound outside, and jumping up in a hurry, flung on his clothes and slipped out. It was about three in the morning, a clear, cold night, and a crescent moon just rising.

Men—two or three at least—were moving among the pines. He heard their cautious steps, and, as he crept up, low-toned voices.

"Here's the line," said one. "Put your stake in here."

Jack's heart gave a great throb. Someone was staking the next claim. He had not thought of that. What a fool he was! Why had he quarrelled with Tony? Tony might have had it just as well as these strangers. Very stealthily he came nearer, and presently

got close enough to see four men with stakes and measuring chain, busily at work. Three were putting in the stakes, the fourth, a very tall, gaunt man, was directing their operations.

Then, as Jack watched, suddenly it came to him that it was not the next claim these men were staking. It was *his own!*

His first impulse was to rush forward and indignantly order them off. At that moment the tall man turned, and a gleam of moonlight fell upon his long, sallow face, showing his big hooked nose, bare upper lip, and chin beard. And instantly Jack recognised him as Reed Harmer, the most notorious claim-jumper in the mountains of British Columbia.

Reed Harmer! The man who knew more of the intricacies of mining law than most lawyers. Certainly he was not here without good cause. And like a flash the cause struck Jack—struck him with a force that made him reel as though under a heavy blow.

Unwittingly he must have run his tunnel beyond the strict limits of his claim. The treasure chamber was not his at all!

For a moment all went black. He grasped at a tree-trunk to steady himself, and as in a ghastly dream watched the men going steadily about their work.

But Jack Lytton was not the sort to go under without a struggle. With a great effort he overcame the numbing shock of the discovery, and tried to consider what was best to do.

It came to him presently that all was not yet lost. The law gives the original finder of mineral the right to re-stake. That is to say, if someone else has not staked first.

Staking alone, however, gives no title to a claim. The claim must be properly registered at a crown-mining office. Reed Harmer would, of course, have to register before he became the owner of the Barren Mountain Mine. If he (Jack) could reach Brooksville first, he might still save the situation.

But what earthly chance would he have? Harmer, of course, had a horse ready. Yes, there it was, hung up to a branch on the other side of the clearing. And he himself would have to do the journey on foot.

"That's right, boys," came Harmer's voice again. "Now I reckon I'll go ahead and register. Meantime you sit tight, and if that young fool of a Britisher comes out and makes trouble, I guess you'll know how to deal with him."

"You bet we will, boss," answered one of the men with a low laugh.

Harmer walked across to his horse. Jack waited no longer. He turned and slipped away unnoticed among the trees.

Re-entering the shack, he put on heavy boots, stuffed a piece of bread in his pocket, came out again, and turned his face, not down the track, but straight up the hill. For he had made up his mind to cross the divide. By road it was thirty miles to Brooksville; across the mountain it was barely half that distance. Whether he would ever get across was an open question, for the snow would still be deep on the heights. Still, it was his only chance, and he meant to take it.

He knew the going would be bad, but it proved actually worse than he had expected. There was a deal of snow still on the upper ground, and the day thaws and night frosts had turned it into sheets of ice. His nailed boots slipped in every direction on the treacherous surface, and when he came to the rocks towards the top he was obliged in many places to crawl on hands and knees.

The worst of it was that he had been steadily over-working and under-feeding for weeks past. His strength was by no means what it had been, and several times he was forced to stop and lean giddily against a tree-trunk or boulder before he could procced.

It was not nice country to negotiate even in broad daylight. Now in the thin moonlight it was full of real peril. There were places where a slip would have sent him toppling down into black gorges hundreds of feet deep; others where he had to clamber slowly across great clitters of loose, jagged rocks among which an ill-judged step might mean a wrenched ankle or broken leg.

It was cruelly cold, too, on the top of the pass. A thin wind moaned across the snow-fields, and the loneliness was terrifying.

The sky was beginning to grow golden over the eastern mountains, and the stars to fade as he crossed the crest of the divide, and at a more rapid pace made his way down hill again.

An hour later the red sun tipped the range behind, and its ruddy light fell on a good-sized stream which, swollen with snow water, swirled down the centre of the valley. Ice-floes swam on its yellow flood, and white mists steamed upwards from its bitterly cold surface.

Jack reached the edge, paused, and stood shivering.

"It doesn't look exactly inviting," he muttered. "It's the sort of cold tub one could do without on a morning like this. Still, there's no help for it."

The cold took his breath away as he plunged into the water, and he was barely waist deep when the force of the stream swept him off his legs. Then followed a desperate battle which seemed to Jack to last hours, but was really only a matter of minutes. The freakish current whirled him this way and that, and time and again he dodged the swimming ice-floes by a sort of miracle.

He was numbed to the bone and shaking like a man in ague when at last he scrambled out on the far side, and it was all he could do to climb the steep bank.

He felt as if he would have given half his mine for a single cup of hot coffee, but there was no house near, and in any case he had no time to waste.

Then he bethought him of his bread. It was soaked to a sort of dough, but he swallowed it and felt a trifle better. Presently the sun shone out brightly. It had not much warmth, but it made the air a trifle less chilly, and as exercise sent the blood moving again in his veins, he quickened his pace once more.

He was getting near the road now. The town was only a couple of miles away. Had he managed to beat Harmer? Well, he would know soon.

The road ran along the valley, then up a slope, and round the

The force of the stream swept him off his legs, and whirled him this way and that among the ice-floes.

end of a long ridge of low hill. Topping the rise, he saw the little wooden town lying in the hollow beyond. Smoke rose from the chimneys straight into the calm air; a boy whistling cheerfully was driving out cows into their pasture.

Jack knew the place well. He could spot the very house where the registrar's office was. Desperately footsore, aching in every limb, and with his wet clothes clinging to his tired body, he pushed on at top speed. He was less than half a mile from the outskirts of the settlement when the sound of horse's hoofs in the distance struck terror to his soul. He glanced back. Away in the distance came a man's voice urging a tired horse.

The air was so crystal clear that, in spite of the distance, Jack could easily recognise the great length of limb, the pointed goatee beard, and wide-brimmed slouch hat of Reed Harmer.

Yes, it was he. Summoning all his remaining energies, Jack broke into a shambling run.

Instantly the steady click-click of trotting hoofs changed to the clippety-clop of a canter. As he ran, Jack looked back once more over his shoulder. As he had realised already by the sound, Harmer had taken alarm. With quirt and spurs he was forcing his horse along at top speed.

Hands clenched, heart throbbing as if it would burst, Jack ran desperately onwards, but every moment the sound behind grew clearer.

Half the remaining distance was passed, and Harmer had not yet caught him. But every step was now an agony to Jack, and his strength was failing so fast that he knew in his soul that he could never last out.

Another hundred yards. He had passed two outlying houses. He was at the end of the straggling main street, but still a good three hundred yards from his goal, when Harmer came abreast.

The man was spattered all over with mud, and his long, gaunt face was very white, while his sweating horse was nearly foundered.

He turned his head as he passed Jack.

"Miss is as good as a mile, eh, Britisher?" he taunted. "I tell ye, ye've got to be mighty smart to get ahead o' Reed Harmer."

He cut his horse cruelly, and the poor brute, swaying from side to side, cantered on.

Jack made no answer. He had no breath left to speak. He still ran on mechanically, but hope was dead in his breast. As in an ugly dream, he saw Harmer reach the door of the Record Office, fling himself off his horse, and, leaving the wretched animal standing steaming in the street, plunge through the door.

"Beaten on the post!" muttered Jack. "Well, that settles it."

It was no use running any more. He slacked to a walk, and felt in his pocket. He still had a couple of dollars. At any rate, he could buy a breakfast.

Now that the stimulus of the race was over, he felt suddenly so weak and tired that nothing seemed to matter. The fact was that the shock of his loss, together with the fearful exertion of his struggle over the mountain and through the flooded river, had left him in a curiously numbed condition. At the present moment warmth, rest, food seemed the only things worth living for.

Curious glances were cast at him by the passers-by as, white-faced and staggering with sheer fatigue, he pushed on in the direction of the little hotel. But Jack paid no attention.

It was perhaps two minutes after Harmer's arrival at the Record Office that Jack reached the door of the building on his way to the hotel.

He was exactly opposite when Harmer came rushing out. The man's face was absolutely livid.

Jack stopped short, and stood staring stupidly. For the life of him he could not imagine what had happened. Harmer never even seemed to see him. He flung himself on to his horse again, drove in the spurs, and galvanised the wretched beast into a gallop.

Jack, in a state of bewildered amazement, turned into the office.

The recorder, a square-built, clean-shaven man, stared hard at Jack's grey face, then pointed to a chair. Jack dropped into it.

"Are you another of them?" asked the recorder. "I mean, are you from Barren Mountain?"

"I'm the original owner," said Jack, hoarsely. "I cut beyond my limit, and Harmer restaked."

The recorder grunted. "Well, if it's any satisfaction to you to know it, Reed Harmer is none the richer," he said.

Jack gasped.

"You mean it's mine still?"

"No," answered the recorder, gravely. "A third party has already recorded the claim."

"A third party!" repeated Jack, in tones of hopeless bewilderment. "Who is that?"

"That I am not at liberty to tell you," replied the recorder.

Jack pulled himself together, and struggled to his feet.

"I suppose I shall find out sooner or later,"

he said, grimly, and was turning to leave the place, when a hand fell upon his shoulder.

He jerked round and found himself face to face with Antony West.

"You, Tony?" he gasped, almost too surprised for words.

"Myself, Jack, and nobody else," answered Tony, cheerfully. "I am 'the third party.'"

Jack's jaw dropped. He could not speak.

"It's all right, old chap," said Tony, pushing Jack back into the chair. "The fact was I spotted Harmer's little game just twenty-four hours before you did. Yesterday evening I was down at Rawlinson's and overheard Harmer and a pal talking over this game they meant to play on you. So I planned to get in ahead of them, and with the help of a good horse just managed it comfortably."

For some seconds Jack sat silent. Then he thrust out his hand. Tony took it and gripped it heartily.

"I'm glad the mine's yours," said Jack at last.

"Mine, Jack? You're crazy. You don't think I'd try Harmer's game on you?"

"Legally, it's yours," said Jack, stubbornly.

"Hang the law!" replied Tony lightly. "Mr. Recorder, bear witness that I hereby renounce all claim to the Barren Mountain Mine, and restore it to its rightful owner."

"The fee for the record will be five dollars," said the recorder drily, as he dipped his pen in the ink.

"No," cried Jack. "Put in Antony West as partner and half owner. Tony, you will, won't you?"

"I don't deserve it," said Tony with a laugh. "Still, if you'll let me shell out for working expenses, I won't refuse a good offer. Come on, Jack. Let's go to breakfast."

And taking his old chum's arm, the two went out together.

THE END.

IF YOU WANT TO WIN A GUINEA PRIZE, STUDY THIS MESSAGE CAREFULLY,

R. S. Warren Bell has written a special long complete Greyhouse story for the September "Captain". It is entitled "The Secret Service", and is one of the best yarns the author of "Black Evans" has ever written. In the number will also be found many other splendid tales and interesting articles.

Then turn to page 1031 for particulars of our new and interesting Graphology Competition.

A Fair Exchange

:: By JAMES DUNCAN ::

Illustrated by W. F. Thomas

I

"EVER stopped a runaway horse?"

"Or rescued anybody from a fire?"

"Or swum out with a life-line through the boiling surf?"

The small boy in the scout's garb flushed a fiery red, and looked as if he would like to break his patrol-staff over the heads of his interrogators. But instead he fidgeted from foot to foot, and finally flared out with a furious :—

"No."

"Ah!" said Chatteris, laughing lightly. "Then whatever, Mouse, do you mean by being a scout? I thought scouts were always doing that sort of thing. Eh, Squire?"

The third of the party, who, astride across a bucket, did his best to peel potatoes, grinned pleasantly at the scout's embarrassment.

"His bark's worse than his bite," he said, indicating Chatteris. "Never mind him, kid. He's trying to pull your leg."

"No—but seriously!" cried Chatteris, with much concern. "That get-up isn't a fake, Mouse? You *are* a scout?"

"Second class," replied the small boy. "The Bear Patrol."

He was struggling to overcome his shyness, and also his surprise at finding the two there. When he had set off in the morning to solve a tempting wisp of smoke that curled above the copse by Wivelcombe he had expected to find a gipsy camp, perhaps, or a party of some neighbouring patrol; he had not expected, not by any chance, a trim tent occupied by Squire and Chatteris. For the school had broken up a week ago, and in his view Squire and Chatteris should have been a hundred miles away by now, instead of encamped so snugly on the moor here. Catch him staying so near the old show, he told himself, if he wasn't forced to because his people lived there!

So Moorhouse, otherwise the Mouse, had not only been astonished but abashed to stumble so dramatically upon Squire and Chatteris. They were prefects; and it looked, he felt, as if he had been spying on them. Besides, he was rigged out in his scout clobber!

It was bad enough at any time to be cross-examined by two prefects; it was much worse when you had bare knees and knickers, and a staff, and a whistle round your neck—and you didn't know how those dignitaries would take it! Term was over, of course, and their jurisdiction had lapsed, but—well, Chatteris was an awful man for ragging!

"The Bear Patrol," laughed Squire. "Great man! That's the name of the local troop, I suppose?"

Moorhouse nodded stiffly.

"Can you cook?"

As Squire groaned this question he tossed a mutilated potato into the pan.

"Because," he went on, quickly, with a glance at Chatteris, "I don't see why you shouldn't stay and cook our dinner."

"I can peel a potato, anyhow," said the Mouse.

An hour afterwards, as he was rinsing the plates in the rill below the camp, to Chatteris, reclined at full length on the heather, there dawned the glimmer of a mighty truth. He turned upon his elbow, regarding Squire.

"Old man," he said, "this camping-out's A 1. It's much more juicy when you've got a fag."

Squire nodded. He had been thinking the same thing.

"Yes. A fag to do the donkey work," he smiled.

And spontaneously their glances wandered to the small form which had just risen from its knees beside the water.

"He knows the country, too," said Chatteris.

"And he frizzled those young chops all right," Squire added.

"Rather fun to keep him with us in his scout clobber."

"An idea," admitted Squire. "Yes, an idea."

Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar; but scratch a prefect in the holidays and you find him quite a normal personage. Such, at any rate, was the conclusion which small Moorhouse with his plates had now arrived at. If anybody had told him a fortnight ago that he would be hobnobbing over grub with Squire and Chatteris, he would have denied the soft impeachment feelingly. And he'd have meant it.

But now he was hoping that they'd invite him to come to-morrow!

"Squat," bade Chatteris, when the plates were dried.

And Moorhouse "squatted."

"Mouse, are you an expert at camping-out?"

The youngster shook his head with a faint blush.

"Well, would you like to put in a few days with us?"

And now the eyes in his eager face were kindling. "I say, Chatteris," he faltered. "Honestly?"

"Yes. We're going to trek round a bit. Do you think your people will let you?"

"I'll go and ask," he answered, jumping up.

"But you've got to come, remember, in that clobber," cried Chatteris, with a glance at his own grey trousers and shabby coat. "You'll give us tone, you know. You'll give us tone."

The Mouse's face fell, for he was convinced that they were laughing at him. "It's the best rig for camping," he said, doggedly, afraid, if he gave any other answer, that they might think he was ashamed of being a "bear."

"Of course," smiled Chatteris. "Well, trot home and see if you can get leave."

And that is how it happened that he joined them the next morning, his face beaming, his gripsack on his back.

For two more days they stayed at Wivelcombe, but struck camp on the next toward Chadleigh Tor, where Chatteris was hoisted by the petard of one of his own jests. For having spied a shady corner in a lush meadow which had palpably been fashioned for a camp, they ascertained the name of the farmer who owned it, and approached him there and then for his permission. Chatteris did the asking with his finest air, but it was all lost on the bucolic moorman, who, seeing only two dusty figures in shabby clothes, was in the very act of setting his dogs on them when his eye fell on a third form in their rear. This was the small figure of the Mouse, loaded with the impedimenta of the camp; but at the sight of him the farmer grinned, and remarked that if it were "for un" he didn't mind; for "scouts was scouts," he added, enigmatically, with other words which seemed to amuse Chatteris. So they got their leave; and as they pitched their tent—"He gives us tone, you know," Squire quoted slyly.

It was here, by Chadleigh Tor, that Chatteris fell foul of the cheap-jack. He and Squire had sauntered down to the village in the evening, when they found a crowd of rustics clustered round a caravan, from the steps of which a stranger was haranguing. He was a big fellow in a tall, white hat, with a blotched face and a mouth twisted maliciously. The natives, men and women, gaped at him and his gay caravan, and he was discoursing glibly on the merits of his wares.

"Now," he cried, while Squire and Chatteris edged nearer, "I'm not 'ere, ladies and gentlemen, upon the make. I'm 'ere to introduce you to the most marvellous specific for coughs, colds, rheumatics, and the fever." He turned to the assistant at his back, who handed him a bottle and a pill-box. "The medicine in this bottle, gents, and the pills in this 'ere box, they're the most wonderful discovery of the century. They're prescribed by all the doctors in Lunnon, where I comes from, and they cures every ailment but a broken neck. Now who says box and bottle for 'alf a crown?"

He paused to wipe his brow while the rustics gaped.

"And if you're not satisfied I gives you your money back. There, that's straight, gentlemen. Who bids first?"

There was a rustle on the outskirts of the little crowd, and a woman's voice inquired timidly:—

"Master, did ye say they'd cure the toothache?"

"Toothache!" the fellow roared with grand contempt. "The first two doses says good-bye to toothache. You *can't* 'ave toothache if you take this mixture. This way, missus. The two for 'alf a crown!"

But the woman hung back and one of the yokels guffawed.

The cheap-jack appeared tremendously indignant, and restoring the articles to his assistant, he took another pill-box from his

pocket, and held it up and showed that it was empty.

"Now," he cried, "I'm not 'ere on the make; I've told you that, but it's clear you don't believe me. For 'alf a dollar I'm offering you a sovereign's worth; I'm out of pocket on every lot I sell. Well, I'll tell you what I'll do to show I'm straight. I've an empty pill-box 'ere, gents, and"—diving into a jingling pocket—"'alf a crown. I put the 'alf-crown in the pill-box! Now will anyone give me a tanner for *that* lot?"

And he held up the box in which they had seen the bright half-crown deposited.

The rustics nudged each other and whispered. They had watched the silver dropped into the box all right. Half a crown for sixpence! This looked like business at last!

But they were cautious, and he had repeated his offer before a fellow who chewed a wisp of straw proffered a sixpence, grinning sheepishly.

In exchange the man gave him the pill-box, and, wrenching the lid off, the yokel laughed. "Ay. Un's half a crown for sure," he cried, in glee.

When his neighbours had inspected it, and assured themselves it was, they clustered closer and began to cry for more. But the cheap-jack only smiled and shook his head, explaining fluently that the man who'd trusted him had got a bargain, but those who bought his medicines would get a better one. In which fell moment his glance rested on Chatteris.

"Ah! But there's a young gentleman," he cried, "who knows a good thing when it's offered, I'll go bail. Now see, sir"—as the rustics pushed Chatteris forward—"'ere's another box and another 'alf-crown. I pops the one into the other—so!"

With a flip he dropped the coin into the box, and, snapping his fingers, begged Chatteris to buy it.

"'Ere you are, sir. For a bob!" he cried. "For one bob only."

Chatteris hesitated, then produced a shilling. The purchase was made, and the man turned to his pills and bottles.

These were beginning to sell fast at last, when Chatteris, who had retired from the press to examine his prize, came pushing furiously back, declaring that he had been robbed.

"This half-crown's bad!" he cried. "I want my shilling."

But the cheap-jack merely laughed and jeered at him.

"Mister, is yours bad?" he appealed to the man with the wisp of straw.

"No, no," he was assured, "mine's right enough."

And again the coin was passed round for inspection.

But Chatteris clutched his, and insisted noisily that it was base, till the rustics, resenting his interference with the sale, followed the cheap-jack's lead of deriding him, and asserted that he could not recognise good money when he saw it. Then the assistant, who had slipped down at a whisper from his master, nudged the straw-chewer, and the two began to hustle Chatteris.

"It isn't worth it," Squire whispered to him. "Hang it! A shilling isn't worth a row!"

"But why should I be swindled?" fumed Chatteris.

Induced, however, to withdraw, he departed, hurling hot threats at the cheap-jack, declaring that he would expose him and stop his trade. The man screamed angrily in reply.

"You never saw a fellow in such a paddy!" concluded Chatteris, when they talked it over afterwards.

The Mouse had been hiding a smile while they told the story; now that it was finished he looked prim.

"I expect you're right," he murmured, "in spotting the chap who bought the first half-crown as a confederate."

"A what?" cried they; for neither had thought of this.

"A decoy—to gull the villagers, you know. Of course, the half-crown given to him was good."

Uncomfortable silence followed, for it was rather annoying to both of them to have their eyes opened in this fashion by a kid. Then Chatteris caught Squire's eye, and they burst out laughing.

"For a bear cub," said Chatteris at last, "you seem, Mouse, to have some wits about you."

II

"THERE he is!"

"Yes, by Jove! And that's the beast with the straw! Only now he's got up differently."

They had moved on to the village of King's Salterton, and Squire and Chatteris were in the little main street when they sighted the cheap-jack and his confederate. They hoped to escape his notice, for they wanted no more to do with him, but before they had gone many yards the pattering of feet assailed them, and a moment later the man stood at their side. His companion had discreetly disappeared.

His blotched face was red and passionate, for he had his own explanation of the presence of the boy whom he had swindled. This was betrayed in the first words that he spoke.

"So you've followed me from Chadleigh Tor," he muttered, hoarsely. "You mean to queer my pitch 'ere, misters, do you?"

Chatteris eyed him with a high disdain.

"Let us pass," he answered. "We've no use for you."

The other gripped his wrist and held him. For although Chatteris' answer happened to be the truth—he had quite abandoned any idea of revenge—his tone created the contrary impression and stung the guilty conscience of the rogue.

"I don't believe you," he blustered "What 'ave you come 'ere for, any-'ow?"

"We're camping out," said Squire, stiffly.

"But you followed me from Chadleigh. You've come on purpose!"

"I tell you," flared out Chatteris, "that we wouldn't touch you with the end of a long hop-pole. Neither you nor your dirty confederate."

"You saw him——" the man began, and then checked himself, for the last words had convinced him that he suspected rightly. Then his manner changed and he began to smile.

"Now, look 'ere, young gentlemen," he urged, "why shouldn't we be pals? You're not the sort to rob a poor fellow o' his livin'. If I played you a trick it was all in the way of business. Now I tell you what I'll do for you. See 'ere. You give me back that coin I gev' you, an' I'll give you back your shilling, mister. Straight, I will."

"You hound!" cried Chatteris. "I wouldn't give you your stumer back for any price. I'm going to keep it as a memento of a nasty, low-down thief."

"Then it's war between us, is it?" roared the man "You'll queer my pitch, will you? I'll queer yours first. I'll clear you out of Salterton, my beauties."

And they left him deep in evil thought.

The idea of this ruffian attempting to clear them out of Salterton tickled Chatteris immensely, for this was the last place of their trek, and they intended to remain for several days. They had found an ideal spot, in a little clearing upon a plantation's edge, screened on two sides by high Devonshire lanes. And the next morning when they reviewed it after breakfast, while the Mouse had been dispatched to gather firewood, they agreed that, though they had never camped out before, their first experience should not be their last.

"'Tis a snakes' nest, masters," said the old hedger, and the two campers jumped to their feet in alarm.

"I'm glad you persuaded me to try it," said Squire to Chatteris.

"Yes," said Chatteris, as town-bred as his friend. "It's quite a first-class wheeze. But, hallo! What does this old bird want?"

An ancient individual was approaching them. His complexion was the colour of a walnut, his hands were sheathed in large wash-leather gloves, and he waved a rusty billhook as he came. He appeared in a state of some excitement, yet when he arrived he said nothing for some moments, but regarded them with open-mouthed astonishment.

"Good morning!" said Chatteris, politely.

The old man bent down and peered into their faces.

"Do 'e know what thicky place be, masters?" he said, abruptly.

"It looks like a young plantation," laughed Chatteris.

"'Tis a snakes' nest, masters. Ess, for sure."

"Snakes!" shouted Chatteris, jumping from his stump.

"Ess, snakes," the hedger answered. "Vipers."

"Poisonous?"

"Ess, poisonous, for sure," the old man drawled.

Squire was on his feet as well, and the pair were regarding each other in consternation. A nice spot, their glances said, to choose for a camp! But now they looked at it, wasn't it just the sort of place snakes *would* lurk in? And the ancient shook a sorrowful head at them, and began to grope with his billhook among the ferns.

"Stand clear, masters," he mumbled. "I'll show 'e."

Grasping the hook gingerly in his thick-gloved hands, at a full arm's length from his cautious person, he beat the fern and pried among it, and almost at once they saw it stir. Then he drew back an instant, watching, and two yellowish-brown, undulating strips came slowly glistening into the sunshine. Their mouths were open and their forked tongues darted. Squire and Chatteris sprang back in alarm.

With astonishing agility for his years, the old hedger brought his billhook down upon them. He broke the back of one, but the other glided back among the fern. Snatching the dead snake carefully by the tail he flung it down by the stump on which Chatteris had sat.

"There!" he said, triumphantly. "You'd better move off."

He shambled away before they could thank him again, but the warning he left behind was quite superfluous. Squire had already attacked the tent-pegs, while Chatteris stood transfixed, staring at the dead reptile with an aspect of the most alarmed repugnance.

"Ugh!" he shuddered. "We'll make haste out of this."

The camp was well upon the way to demolition when back came the Mouse with a mighty clump of brushwood.

"Phew!" cried Chatteris, blowing out his cheeks. "We've had a narrow squeak, Mouse. A narrow squeak."

And he led him dramatically to the dead snake by the stump.

"It swarms with them," said Squire.

Moorhouse dropped upon his knees and regarded the dead snake closely. His lips were quivering a little when he rose.

"Who killed it?" he asked, in a queer voice.

"An old hedger," they informed him, "with a billhook."

The Mouse took it by the tail, as the old man had done, and then he took it by the head, and squeezed its jaws open.

"Look out!" cried Chatteris. "Its fangs are poisonous!"

"Who says so?"

"The hedger told us. It's a viper. This is a regular vipers' nest, he told us." Chatteris indicated the dismantled camp. "That's why we're moving."

"Seen any others?"

"Yes, another one when this crawled out. It's in the ferns."

The next move of the Mouse astonished them. He dropped on hands and knees among the fern, and after searching for some minutes returned —with a live snake clutched in his small fingers. He fondled it, and let its forked tongue lick him. He stroked its venomous-looking little head.

"That hedger was pulling your leg," he ventured, with some diffidence. "Look, Chatteris. This is what you call a slow-worm, or a blind-worm. So's the one he killed. They're quite harmless."

His town-bred fellow campers stared aghast.

"He declared that they were vipers," they murmured, weakly

"But there are no vipers hereabouts. I don't believe there ever have been at any time. We scouts often catch these slow-worms."

It sounded like swaggering, the Mouse knew; but his uneasiness was nothing compared to theirs. If this yarn went back to the school next term——

"You must keep this dark," said Chatteris, sourly.

The Mouse nodded, and, being something of a diplomatist, went on to argue that the mistake was easy.

"If you've never seen a slow-worm before," he said, "you're dead certain to take it for a snake."

"But why should that old josser want to pull our leg?"

Here was a problem of another nature, but it was the Mouse who first found a solution. And he propounded it while they were putting the camp to rights again, and did his best to father it on Chatteris.

"Don't you think, Chatteris," he said, "it's as you guessed. That cheap-jack fellow doesn't want to do his stunt here until we've gone. Because, you know, he funks you showing him up."

"Of course," said Chatteris, who was quick enough to grasp the clue suggested. "He wants to clear us out as quick as he can. So he squared that hedger to come to us with his snake yarn. He thought he'd frighten us, the silly juggins."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Squire. "He thought he'd frighten us!"

And the Mouse was wise enough to say no more.

They lunched, and after luncheon began to speculate where their enemy's caravan might be. For Chatteris, by way of crying quits, had resolved upon a stroke that pleased him vastly. He and Squire would pocket the deceased slow-worm and place it in the bunk of the cheap-jack. So forth they sallied, leaving the Mouse on guard.

It was dusk before their figures hove in sight again. And then they looked fagged out and dejected, and neither seemed inclined to discuss their errand. It was only by much persuasion and bit by bit that the Mouse managed to get the truth from them.

"Was it hard to find?" he asked at last.

"Was what hard to find?" snapped Chatteris, irritably.

"His caravan!" the Mouse answered, staring.

"It's funny," Squire broke in, "how these yokels swallow everything a johnny like that tells them."

And he went on at a great pace to dilate upon the credulity of the rustic mind. This made Chatteris begin to yawn—perhaps Squire's homily was hardly tactful—and he remarked with a growl that it was time to be turning in

"I'm dead tired," he yawned. "Mouse, spread the rugs out."

"But, I say," the latter urged, when he had done this, "where *has* the bounder pitched his caravan?"

He was not sure, but he fancied that something like the tail of a defunct slow-worm was protruding ever so slightly from Squire's pocket.

"Oh, hang his caravan!" said Chatteris. "If you want to know, Mouse, we haven't been there. We didn't bother to find it after all."

"Why?"

"Oh, go to sleep!" snapped Squire.

It appears that both were curiously reluctant to acknowledge to this youngster whom they had taken under their wing that their quest had been a galling failure. This only transpired after breakfast the next morning, when Chatteris admitted that, although they'd tried their best, the whereabouts of the caravan had eluded them. They had only succeeded in satisfying themselves that the man had held no auction in the village yet—"which seems to show," as Squire reiterated, "that he wants to see the back of me and Chatteris first. He funks us showing him up; you bet he does."

The Mouse was washing up, as usual. With a plate in one hand and the fragments of a jersey which served as dishcloth in the other, he suggested that their enemy might have moved on.

"But if he meant to do that," said Chatteris, "he wouldn't have bribed the hedger to frighten us off. No, I'll bet he's lurking somewhere hereabouts."

"Then let me go and make sure?" ventured Moorhouse.

"You!" they scoffed. "If we couldn't find him, it isn't likely you can!"

"I'd like to have a shot," said the diminutive Mouse.

"Then I'll go with you," said Chatteris.

But this was not at all to Squire's taste. If two went three should go, he urged; and that would mean nobody to guard the camp. And if the cheap jack had really sent the hedger, wouldn't he come spying round to-day to see if his trick had succeeded? And, finding them still there, he might make another attempt.

"No, our place is here," said Squire, valiantly. "Let the Mouse go alone. He doesn't count."

To be candid, this was what the latter wished. Here was his first real chance of shining as a scout! To him the sole honour and sole glory, he told himself, of tracking the enemy to his leafy lair! He felt in no wise daunted by the failure of his companions, for whose qualities as woodsmen he concealed an affectionate contempt. Indeed, this spell of camping-out with Squire and Chatteris was threatening to undermine considerably the Mouse's exaggerated awe of prefects.

Off he set, clutching his patrol-staff and whistling happily underneath his breath. He bore in mind the description they had given him of the cheap-jack and his confederate; he meant also to keep his eyes open for a certain antiquated but mendacious hedger. No sooner had he reached the village, than he turned into the ale-house and begged a glass of water. But though he lingered over this audaciously he found himself the only visitor, and a veiled inquiry of the serving-lass elicited nothing of the men he sought.

"You're a scout!" she said, elaborating the obvious.

The Mouse admitted, with importance, that he was. And if the scouts should wish to pitch a camp there, did she know of any nice, quiet spots, he asked. "Where the camp couldn't be seen, you know," he added, slyly.

No; she knew of no such places thereabouts. And most o' the land belonged to Squire Butland, and 'e were a terror for warning trespassers off.

So Moorhouse thanked her nicely and departed.

He perched himself upon a stile to think it out. The van, he argued, was drawn, of course, by a horse. Therefore it must be camped somewhere near grass and water. But, clearly, not in any obvious place, else Squire and Chatteris would naturally have seen it. So he could rule the obvious places out.

If his reasoning was rudimentary, remember that he was only a second-class scout. He was quite convinced, as he mused upon his stile, that his patrol leader would have cut the knot at once. But he had no time to get back to Wivelcombe and call that astute veteran into counsel.

The worst of this sort of tracking, he concluded, was the utter absence of anything to *track*. No footprints, no clues here and there; nothing but the assumption of a caravan that was lurking somewhere within a mile or two. After an hour's contemplation on his stile he felt more sympathy for Squire and Chatteris.

Well, what would his patrol leader do now? And thus wondering he jumped briskly down.

He crossed the meadow and walked, as one with a purpose, towards the little church which nestled in the trees. Beside it snuggled the parsonage, and when he tried the church door fruitlessly, he sought the former and asked for the church keys. The vicar himself had responded to his knock, and he eyed his visitor's small form with amusement.

"Upon my word!" he smiled. "And what do *you* want the keys for?"

"If you please, sir," the Mouse answered, pleasantly, "I thought perhaps I could climb up to the tower. It's square, so I thought it would have a roof?"

"Oh, you did, did you? Well, it has. But why do you want to climb to the roof?"

"There must be such a ripping view from there, sir."

"There is," the vicar answered, genially; and, having more time on his hands than usually, he found the keys and led the way at once. From the tower the view proved all that he had claimed for it, and its small admirer grew thoroughly absorbed.

Presently he pointed to a spinney about two miles, as he judged it, to the west. A bar of silver glittered through the trees, but it was something else which held the Mouse's glance. The patch of sward adjoining was blotched by one black speck.

"Sir! What a funny place to dump a cottage down?" he queried.

"And why funny?" the vicar asked, indifferently.

"I mean so lonely, sir—so away from everyone."

The vicar leaned forward, following the direction of his finger.

"What! That?" he said. "But there's no cottage there." He grew quite interested and stared intently. "H'm! That's strange! Just wait a moment while I fetch my glass."

The Mouse waited, trembling with excitement. But no sooner had the telescope revealed a caravan than he became all pins and needles to be off.

"Some gipsy fellows, no doubt," the vicar had said.

Well, it might be gipsies, and again it might not; the Mouse's business was to ascertain. So forty minutes later found him at the spinney's verge, whither he had made his way most warily, on the alert for all approaching footsteps, ready to take shelter if he could, and, if not, to play the part of innocence. Crawling through the brushwood on his hands and knees, he reconnoitred on the edge of it.

And there he almost shouted in his glee. For the caravan was undoubtedly the one he sought. He saw the cheap-jack with his confederate and pallid assistant resting there, and hard by browsed a placid horse.

In tracking his quarry to its "lair" we can claim for the Mouse no sleuth-hound perspicacity or valour. His feat was no astonishing

achievement, and is unlikely to be immortalised among scout chronicles.

But, at least, he had done better than Squire and Chatteris.

III

It was a queer story he unfolded when he had got back safe and sound to the camp at tea-time.

"I could hear them talk as plain as anything," he said, when he had explained how he crept up through the spinney. "And, I say! They're not going to begin on the villagers this evening."

"They're not! Why not?" cried Chatteris.

"Because they're coming here instead," was the quiet reply.

It was said so evenly that it eluded them, and the Mouse, in his element, had to explain.

"He's got an awful down on you, Chatteris. He's dead certain you followed him to Salterton to show him up. He's sick that he couldn't deceive you about the snakes"—the Mouse has some claims as a diplomatist—"so to-night he's coming here to smash our camp up. 'As soon as it's got dusk,' I heard him saying. They're all three coming. To smash us up."

"Well, we'll give them a warm reception!" laughed Chatteris.

Now this was very easy to remark, but not so easy when it came to discussion. That two boys and one "mouse" could overcome and slaughter three grown men was the sort of thing that might occur in books, but not, as Chatteris lamented, in real life! In its own way valour was all very well; but valour that invited ignominious battering deserved no better name than madness.

Thus Chatteris, while the Mouse nodded assent.

Stealthily through the silent wood crept the three marauders till they reached the campers' tent.

"They're all three coming? You're sure?" demanded Squire.

"Oh, yes; all three. To make a proper job of it."

For some time they debated their best course. Should they call the villagers to their assistance? Should they strike camp and beat a swift retreat? Should they lurk in ambush and trust to luck to scare the raiders off?

But their enemy was minded for a fight. This was clear, else why should he be coming?

"And it's *infra dig*," sighed Chatteris, "to fight with him."

"More *infra dig*," snapped Squire, "to run away!"

Now the Mouse had contributed nothing to

this debate, and, at last, Chatteris turned to him with a laugh.

"Well—what have you to say?" he asked, indifferently.

With a nod of his sagacious little head the Mouse began to speak in an eager whisper.

* * * * *

The dusk was falling tenderly on King's Salterton when a man whose mouth was twisted most maliciously stole down the long lane from the village with two delighted rascals at his heels. He was carrying a large stick and a dark lantern, and his companions were also armed with cudgels.

He led on, chuckling to himself, and when at last he reached the meadow at the lane's end he clambered, very quietly, over the gate. Here he gestured towards the hedge, along the length of which a deep ditch ran. This ditch was full of slimy ooze and water; but, since the three elected it for their course, they preferred, it seems, concealment to mere comfort. It led them past a strip of turnip-field, and into a tiny and triangular clearing.

"Lie low!" the cheap-jack bade his forces.

At the far end of the clearing a plantation loomed, and on the edge of this they had espied what they were looking for. It was the outline of a campers' tent that stretched grey and ghostly in the falling darkness. A peaceful and idyllic picture it made, but those who watched it had no use for idyls.

One of the three, a man who chewed a dirty piece of straw, had splashed his legs in slime from ankle to knee, and was feeling that some dry boots would be welcome. The pale lout at his elbow shivered, but when these two urged impatiently and fretfully an immediate assault, their master dissented in a raucous whisper. "We must make sure first we've trapped our birds," he leered. "That they're inside there, and fast asleep." And he went on, by way of encouragement, to depict in language that was certainly full-bodied the dismay of his victims when they found their tent demolished.

"We'll smother it over their bloomin' 'eads!" he said.

So for full forty minutes by his watch they waited, while the assistant's teeth chattered and he longed to sneeze, and tent and shadow merged more and more into one. But at long last their leader stirred his numbing limbs. He rose. And stealthily the three crept forward.

They reached the tent. It greeted them with silence. "Fast asleep!" the cheap-jack chuckled, and rushed in.

But he had no sooner thrust the flap back than he got a shock. He was expecting to find recumbent, slumbering bodies; he found nothing but a patch of flattened grass. No vestige of clothing or of crockery; no grip-sacks that might have made good rifling; no sign of Chatteris or Squire.

Disappointing as this proved, there was worse to follow. For it had been their amiable intention not only to thrash the boys and turn them adrift, but also to slash their precious tent to ribbons. Had not the hedger reported of its magnificence?

So they had come to hack and demolish a brand-new tent; they were confronted, on inspection, with a weather-worn and palpably antique one. Long rents yawned in its decaying canvas; the rotting guy-ropes seemed ready to drop to pieces.

Such as it was, however, they destroyed it savagely, for the charred sticks of a fire, some empty tins, and other relics of like sort at hand, confirmed the hedger's story of the site. And marvelling that anybody could have put up with such sorry quarters, how were they to know that, *en route* from Wivelcombe, Chatteris had come across this canvas derelict, and had been persuaded by Squire to take it along? "The Mouse can carry it," Squire had urged. "And you never know when a thing will come in useful!" (He had little idea how his foresight would be justified!)

So the cheap-jack stamped upon the wretched thing and hacked it. The man with the straw endeavoured to dry his legs with it. The assistant flung its remnants to fern and stubble. They left not so much of it as would cover a rat.

"At any rate, we've done their beastly tent in!" the cheap-jack cried, exultingly, at last.

We leave him contemplating his triumph, while the pale lout's teeth were rattling in their gums, and the straw-man's well-soaked boots squidged piteously.

In explanation it is necessary to look backwards. For an hour before the raiders had passed down the high lane three figures—smaller, but not less stealthy—had been hiding near the stile whereon one of them had rested that same morning. But although they were laden like packhorses, it may be remarked that the most diminutive had the least to carry; and he it was, as soon as the time was ripe, who seemed to be in control of the expedition.

"Sh! There they go!" he whispered, indicating the party of the enemy as it flitted past the cross-roads on its errand. "Now, come along!"

He led straight as the crow flies to a small spinney, where in the daylight a bar of silver shone. When this was reached they made out a bulky object, and a horse, which was tethered to the object, whinnied.

The hearts of Squire and Chatteris were thumping with the strangeness of their mission. They felt, they admitted afterwards, like burglars. But the Mouse, with all the composure in the world, laid one hand on the horse's neck and patted it, and called it, in honeyed accents, his "old fellow." The venerable beast seemed rather to enjoy this, and presently was nosing its small friend's shoulder. Out came some lumps of sugar in a trice, and cordial relations were established.

But the behaviour of Squire and Chatteris was more wanton. For the former had scaled the steps of the caravan, and, opening the door, had entered to deposit his burdens. With the canvas of a very magnificent tent he was given a hand by Chatteris, and when the two had packed everything quite cosily inside, they began to busy themselves with shafts and harness. By now the Mouse had untethered his aged friend, and when the latter had been backed between the shafts it stood and turned a placid eye upon them, with no resentment whatever at being disturbed.

"I'm ready," its gaze announced, "as soon as you are."

"Now!" the Mouse bade. "Quickly!" And he picked up one of the only two packages left.

In precise terms this was not a package, but a square of bare boarding; and the second, which Squire was brandishing, was a long pole with a sharpened end. When its other end had been secured by a couple of staples to the boarding the result was a tolerable notice-board, whereon was painted in large characters a legend on which they shed the light of Squire's lantern. It had been painted by the Mouse, and he was proud of it

A FAIR EXCHANGE——!

it read. And that was all.

"And now?" asked Squire, when the board was upright.

"Yes, certainly," smiled Chatteris.

So they took an envelope, and when they had inscribed it with the Mouse's fountain pen, they tacked it to the pole beneath the notice. Its message ran:—

If you want your caravan you'll find it at the police station at Chadleigh Tor. We shan't touch any of your things. Ta, ta!

Carefully now they drove over the grass, but in the lane the Mouse whipped up his horse. In this manner they proceeded from King's Salterton.

"I think," laughed Squire to Chatteris, "we've scored!"

"But what wouldn't I give to see his face," mused Chatteris, "when he gets back from raiding our camp, to find that we've levanted off with his!"

"I say, I suppose he'll understand what the notice means? You're sure he'll tumble to the 'fair exchange'?"

"Oh, he can't help seeing it—how can he? We're not robbing him. We're only moving his camp."

"As he meant to move ours. The silly juggins!"

So Squire and Chatteris complimented each other, very pleased with the ruse by which they had turned the tables, while the Mouse, his eyes fixed on the horse's bobbing ears, chirruped gently to that amiable quadruped, and claimed no credit for his share in the victory. Greatness, like virtue, is its own reward.

How Animals Talk

By W. J. WINTLE,
D.Sc., F.Z.S.

Illustrated by
L. R. BRIGHTWELL

PROBABLY the first question that will occur to the minds of my readers will be, "Yes; but do they talk?" It seems an odd thing to speak of animals talking. In fables and fairy tales we read of animals saying and doing all kinds of wonderful things; and, of course, we know quite well that these things never really happened. But I shall try to show you that animals do talk in a simple kind of way.

They do not think and act with the intelligence and reasoning powers that are credited to them in some popular books about animals and birds. They have not highly developed brains like ours, nor have they organs of speech capable of forming a number of distinct words. Their minds are probably something like ours were when we were babies, and they can think only in a very simple sort of way. We can only expect them to make sounds which convey simple ideas and information to other animals of the same kind.

Take your pet dog, for example. When he is angry he barks in a sharp, fierce fashion; but when he barks for pleasure when you take him out or when you return home after absence, he makes quite a different sort of noise. When he wants to be let out, he whimpers; when he is suspicious of another dog, he growls; and when he is lonely, he howls. In this way he makes different sounds to convey different feelings, and this is a kind of very simple talking.

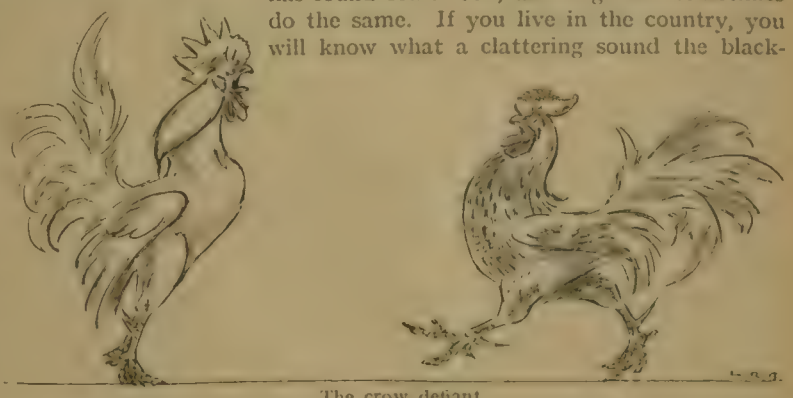
But if you notice the cocks and hens in the farmyard, you will soon find that they can do more than this. When the cock finds some food, he utters a peculiar note, and all the hens come running at once. It is quite plain that they understand this note to mean food. They never come to him when he crows. But if there is another cock anywhere near, he will begin to crow in a defiant kind of way, and the two will try to get at one another and begin to fight. When a hen has laid an egg, she sets up a loud cackling, and her lord and master, the rooster, will generally join in.

If a hawk or other big bird flies overhead, the cock will utter quite a different note, and the hens will run to take shelter. They understand that it means danger. But when a hen has chickens, she begins to talk in quite a new way, and seems to acquire several new words. As she walks with her young family, she clucks in a new way to keep the young birds together. When she wants to call them to some food that she has found, she makes another sound for the purpose; and when there is danger and she wants them to come to her for shelter, she has a third sound for this. If you try to meddle with the chicks, she will make a fourth sound by way of warning you to keep away. So it seems that a hen can speak about seven different words—if you like to call the sounds words.

Now all this is a simple kind of talking. A baby, before it has learnt to speak properly, will make several simple sounds to convey its meaning. When it wants to get at some food, it will make a kind of grunting sound; and it will make quite a different sound when it is pleased and satisfied. The sounds "Mum, mum" and "Dud, dud" are only its way of trying to express pleasure or some want, and are not attempts to say "mamma" or "dadda," as parents are apt to suppose. Animals and birds are like babies in their intellectual capacity, only—like Peter Pan—they never grow up.

But animals often show that they are able to convey ideas to one another, quite apart from mere warnings of danger or anger. Some years ago a dog with a broken leg was taken to a London hospital, where his leg was set, and he was carefully treated till he got well. Some time afterwards he came to the hospital,

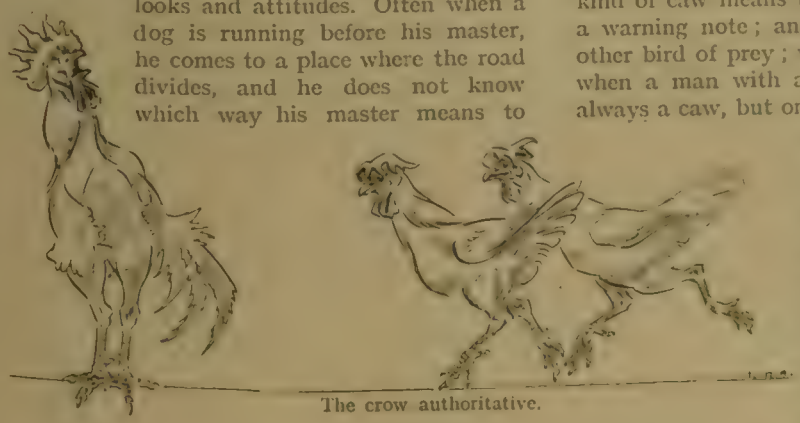
accompanied by another dog that had hurt his legs in a street accident. Now it seemed quite clear that in some way he had told the other dog that if he came with him he would be well treated; but no one could tell how he did it. Sometimes a dog that has found some food will fetch another dog to the spot, and here again it is clear that some kind of communication must pass between the two



The crow defiant

It is not an exaggeration to call this talking. We can talk without using words, just as deaf and dumb people can talk with their fingers. We can even convey simple ideas, such as that we are pleased, angry, or surprised, by the expression of our faces or by gestures, and this is a simple kind of talking. I shall try to show you that animals can also do this.

The old-fashioned grammars divide speech into three divisions. First come assertions of fact; second are commands or requests; and third are questions. Animals express the first and second kinds by sounds; but, so far as we know, they can ask questions only by their looks and attitudes. Often when a dog is running before his master, he comes to a place where the road divides, and he does not know which way his master means to go. I have seen a dog in such a case stop and turn round to his master with an inquiring look on his face. In fact, his whole attitude was like a note of interrogation. It was perfectly plain that he wanted to be told which way to go. If you are near the door, and your dog does not know if you are going to take him out, he will look first at you, and then at the door, with an expression that shows quite clearly that he is asking if you are going to take him for a run. But I have never heard of an animal making a sound that indicated a question.



The crow authoritative.

When we come to statements of fact, we find plenty of examples. We have already noticed that a cock will tell the hens that he has found some food, and dogs will sometimes do the same. If you live in the country, you will know what a clattering sound the blackbirds make if you disturb them at the nesting season. But if a cat comes along, they make quite a different kind of clattering. In this way they not only tell one another that there is danger, but to some extent they indicate the kind of danger. A clever naturalist in Canada has observed that the crows have several notes to convey different ideas. One kind of caw means that all is well; another is a warning note; another indicates a hawk or other bird of prey; while quite another is used when a man with a gun comes along. It is always a caw, but on a different note or broken up into several short caws.

We often think that rooks can do nothing in the way of talking but utter the familiar caw; but, if we watch them carefully, we shall find that they have quite an extensive vocabulary. One observer, who has spent many hours hidden beneath rookeries and watching the birds, has counted no fewer than thirty-two different sounds—or words, if you like—that they make under different circumstances. But he has not been able to find out the meaning of all these notes; so there is something for you to do if you happen to live near a large rookery. But if you want to find out the mystery of the rook language, you must

be prepared to exercise a lot of patience. It is only by keeping perfectly still and silent that it is possible to observe the doings of wild birds and animals. The slightest sound or movement will alarm them at once.

There are many cases on record where a dog has managed in some way or other to convey information to another. A famous naturalist had two Skye terriers, father and son. The younger dog would never attack a strange dog when alone, but was a very keen fighter when his father was with him. One day the old dog was lying half asleep on the doorstep, and his son was on the wall that overlooked the road. A large mongrel came down the road. The young dog jumped down from the wall, ran up to his father, and made some kind of gesture. Instantly the older animal was on the alert, and the pair ran out of the garden and attacked the stranger. The old dog could not see the stranger, and was half asleep till the other came to call him. It was clear that the younger one was able to convey the information that an intruder was about.

A small terrier was always fed with milk by a servant in the morning. One day the servant was rather late, and went on with her work without giving the dog his meal. He whined round her and tried to make her understand that he had not been fed, but without success. At last he went to the cupboard, and—although he had never been taught to fetch and carry—he took up with his teeth the cup she generally used for his milk, and brought it to her. Here was a clear proof that the dog was trying to tell her to give him his milk.

Some years ago a man was crossing the River Dee, near Aberdeen, in the winter, when it was frozen over, and he fell through the ice. He had a gun with him, and this caught across the hole and so saved him from being drawn under the ice. His dog made frantic efforts to save him, and at last ran off to the neighbouring village, where he caught hold of a man's coat and pulled him until he came along to see what was the matter. He arrived in time to save the other's life. Here there could be no mistake that the dog had the idea of telling the man that he was wanted, although he could not use words for the purpose.

Only a few months back, a cat was in a house in London at night, when the place caught fire. She came to her master's room, and mewed so loudly that she woke him up; and thus was the means of enabling the family to escape. Of course, I do not mean to say that she had the intelligence to know that there was danger, and so wanted to warn her owner. This would be to credit her with more sense than she possessed. Probably she was simply frightened by the smoke, and wanted to be let out. But all the same, there was clearly the attempt to tell her master something; and she did it in the only way that she could—by mewing.

It has been noticed that dogs have two sounds, or words, to announce a discovery. Both are barks, but they are of a different kind, and they are quite unlike the bark of anger or excitement. If the dog finds something merely new or surprising, he gives a short, sharp bark; but if he comes across something painful, such as a dead or wounded person, he gives a bark which sounds very much like a short howl.

When it comes to make a request, an animal always makes a sound that has an "asking" quality, and generally shows the article desired by looking at it or going towards it. This is a very primitive kind of speech, but still it is speech of a sort; and it is very probable that in the days when the human race first appeared on the earth, men and women began to talk in just such simple ways.

A cat generally gives a short mew when it wants something that is near or likely to be granted, such as a saucer of milk or a door to be opened. But when it wants something unusual, it gives a more prolonged and plaintive mew. If the request is not granted, the mew is repeated on a different note, and soon becomes much more urgent and even despairing in tone. If you are inclined to think that this is only fancy, just watch your cat carefully, and you will soon find that it is quite correct.

Where mere sounds do not have the desired effect, the animal will try to communicate his request by signs, as we have seen in some of the cases already mentioned. One night rather late, a schoolmaster at Hammersmith was going home when he was accosted by a retriever dog. The dog could not say "good evening," but he wagged his tail and barked. It was not the noisy bark of excitement, but the quiet, confidential sort of bark that a dog gives when he is trying to ask for something. As no notice was taken, he ran up a side passage and kept on barking. As this had no effect, he ran back and caught hold of the glove that the man was carrying in his hand, and pulled in the direction of the passage. The man held back, and then the dog suddenly snatched the glove away and ran up the passage with it. Naturally

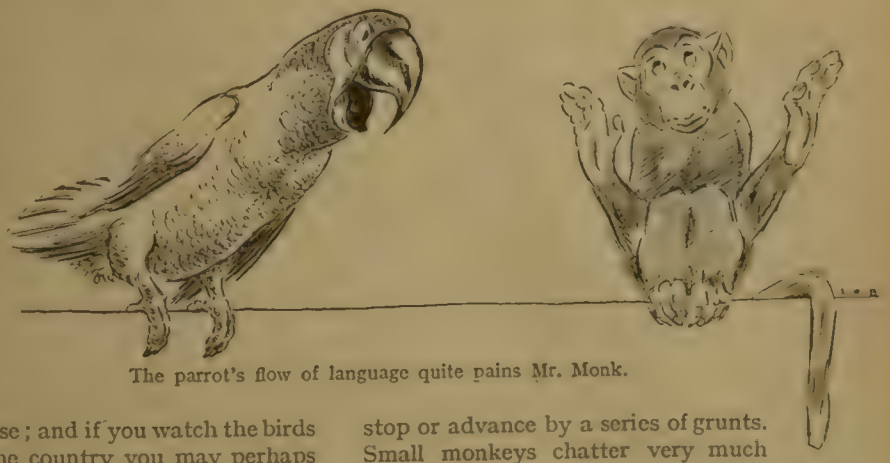
the man went in pursuit, and the dog led him to the gate of a butcher's yard and there dropped the glove, and began to bark again. As it now seemed clear that the dog wanted the gate opened, the man did it, and the dog trotted in without any more fuss. This was a very smart dog.

Birds have many notes or sounds to indicate requests or orders. We have already noticed the case of the hen with her chickens, and similar facts have been observed with wild birds. For instance, the American partridge makes the sound "krrr" when she wants her young ones to crouch down and hide in the grass at the approach of danger. As soon as all is safe again, she calls "K-reet," and instantly all the little chicks jump up and come running to her. When they get older and are able to fly, the signal to take wing is "Kwit, kwit." Very likely there are other sounds, or words, beside these; and if you watch the birds very carefully in the country you may perhaps discover them, for English partridges are very much like their American cousins in this respect.

A great authority on pheasants says that when wild pheasants' eggs are hatched by domestic hens, the young chicks go gaping about for the first day or two and do not obey the orders of their foster-mother, just as if they did not at first understand the hen's language. I have not observed this myself, but my informant certainly ought to know, for he has spent a great part of his life with pheasants. It is likely enough, for different birds have different notes, and they seldom take any notice of the calls of any but their own species.

We should naturally expect to find that the monkeys, being near relations of our own, would be the best and most advanced talkers; but this does not seem to be the case. There was an American professor, some years ago, who went out to Africa and spent some weeks in the forests among the large apes in order to try to learn their language. He even lived for some time in a big cage in the depth of the forest where the chimpanzees were plentiful; but he found out very little indeed.

At the Zoological Gardens the apes have been very carefully studied, but they have not told us much about their conversational powers. In fact, they are rather silent, and do not chatter like the smaller monkeys do. It is thought that some five different words have been made out, but even this is rather uncertain. Perhaps you have heard the story that the monkeys know quite well how to talk, but they are too artful to show it lest men should make slaves of them! You can believe just as much of that tale as you like. But it seems to be true enough that when the baboons are on the march, their leader gives orders to stop or advance by a series of grunts. Small monkeys chatter very much like some young people that I know; but no one has yet been able to make much meaning out of it. So it would seem that our distant cousins, the apes and monkeys, have not made much progress so far in the direction of speech.



The parrot's flow of language quite pains Mr. Monk.

Now we take a long jump, and go from the apes to the insects. It will probably surprise you when I say that it is practically certain that insects can talk; and in the case of ants and bees, they seem to be able to do more than merely express a wish or a command. Ants are marvellously intelligent little creatures; and some naturalists think that instinct is more highly developed in them than in any of the higher animals—even including ourselves.

Intelligence in man takes the form of reason. He thinks over what he has learnt, draws conclusions, and acts accordingly. But in the lower animals intelligence takes the form of instinct. They have a kind of natural impulse which tells them what to do; and the ants and bees are thus enabled to do more marvellous things than any other creatures except man. But it is not safe to say that insects have no

reasoning powers. It is probable that they possess them in a low degree. On the other hand, we do many things by instinct and not by reason. Such natural actions as eating, drinking, and sleeping were not taught us by our parents. A baby takes food long before it is able to think.

But it seems as if intelligence had flowed in two streams through all animal life. One stream we call Reason, and this has attained its greatest perfection in man. The other we call Instinct, and this is seen at its best and highest in the ants. Just as man is lord of the soil, so the ant is lord of the subsoil.

If you study an ant-hill, and learn how wonderfully the little city is organised, you will quickly come to the conclusion that it could not be done unless the citizens had some way of communicating with one another. If you watch two ants when they meet, you will notice that they nearly always stop to greet one another by touching antennæ in various ways. In fact, they seem to be holding a conversation. But if we study their ways more carefully we shall soon be quite sure that some kind of talking goes on.

When an ant finds something too large and heavy to be carried off, she runs back to the nest and soon returns with a number of friends, which help her to bear away the booty. Here it seems quite plain that she somehow managed to tell her friends that their help was needed. If she had gone home with part of the booty, it would be easy to suppose that the other ants saw it, and thought they might just as well come and have some too. But, as she was not able to carry the booty home, the other ants could not have seen it, and the only way they could have known that there was anything about was by her telling them.

Lord Avebury, who kept ants' nests in his study for many years, and spent long days in watching them, probably knew more about these little insects than any other man alive, and he was quite convinced that they communicate with one another by some kind of talking. He tried hundreds of experiments and took all possible precautions to prevent mistakes; and everything went to prove that the ants have some sort of language, probably by touches and gestures with their antennæ.

Here is a condensed account of one of the experiments he described. "I took three tapes, each about 2ft. 6ins. long, and arranged them parallel to one another and about 6ins. apart. One end of each I attached to an ants' nest, and at the other I placed a glass. In the glass at the end of one tape I placed a considerable number of larvæ (three hundred to six hundred), in the second I placed only two or three, and in the third none at all. (These larvæ are what are erroneously known as 'ants' eggs.') I then took two ants, and placed one of them to the glass with many larvæ, the other to that with two or three. Each of them took a larva and returned to the nest, returning for another and so on. Now if several ants came under the above circumstances as a mere matter of accident, or if they simply saw the larvæ that were being brought, and thought they might find a larva in the same place, then the numbers going to the two glasses ought to be approximately equal. On the other hand, if strangers were brought, it would be curious to see whether more were brought to the glass with many larvæ than to that which only contained two or three."

The result of the experiment was that the ants brought 257 friends to help them with the glass containing the large number of larvæ, and only eighty-two to the glass containing only a few. No ants at all went to the empty glass. It was therefore pretty clear that the ants could not only tell their friends that there were larvæ to be found, but could also point out where the larger number lay.

Many other ingenious experiments were made under conditions as puzzling as possible for the ants, but they all went to prove that the little insects were not only intelligent, but could also communicate their intelligence to others. Similar experiments have been tried with bees and wasps, and they also show the existence of some power of communicating ideas to one another.

SOUTHAMPTON STREET,
STRAND, LONDON

Getting our own back is always a very pleasurable occupation. We British have rather a number of honours to recover in the world of sport, for of late years the tide of success has certainly not been with us. The United States has been collecting trophies which we all feel should have a resting-place in England, and their supremacy in games which are essentially British in character has caused considerable heart-burning among sportsmen over here. Consequently, the magnificent success of Lord Wimborne's polo team in America is especially welcome, and there has been much rejoicing over the return home of the cup that has been in enforced exile so long. The four that so emphatically and so unexpectedly scored a great British triumph have made themselves for ever famous in the annals of sport, and the Americans have very greatly increased the pleasure of these international contests by the perfect sportsmanlike manner in which they accepted defeat, and their hearty and sincere appreciation of the merits of the conquering team. There is not the slightest doubt that the sporting relationship between the two countries has been strengthened very considerably in cordiality by reason of the splendid spirit in which the "Big Four" and their partisans played the game on and off the field. The Polo Cup might still have been in America to-day had not the defenders insisted on postponing the first match until Captain Cheape, who had met with a serious accident in a practice game, was fit enough to play. The direct result of this most sportsmanlike action was that they lost the trophy they dearly cherished, for Captain Cheape was the outstanding player on the British side, but they won the sincere regard of all true sportsmen the wide world over. Once and for all they have scotched the reproach that American methods are those of the win-at-any-price sort. And that in itself is an achievement for which we are truly thankful, since we wish the British athlete at all times to have no excuse for defeat but that he met a better man.

Success is apt to follow in the path of success, and though polo and yachting are as wide as the poles apart, the lifting of the Polo Cup is like the silver lining to the cloud of failure, and gives us greater hope than ever that Sir Thomas Lipton will be as fortunate an invader as Lord Wimborne proved. More than sixty years have elapsed since the trophy now known as the America Cup left the shores of England, and ill-fated have been all the attempts made to bring it back. In spite of its misleading name it is a British trophy, for it was originally the "Queen's Cup," and was presented by the Royal Yacht Squadron in 1851 as a prize for a race for yachts of all nations. The commodore of the New York Yacht Club secured it with his famous schooner *America*, and eventually made it a perpetual challenge trophy, with the following two permanent conditions: The race must be sailed in the waters of the country in possession of the cup, and the challenging yacht must be built in the country it represents. A great handicap besets all challenging yachts, as it is stipulated they must be *sailed* to America. This proviso probably frightens off a good number of yacht owners from challenging, but Sir Thomas Lipton cheerily undertakes all risks, and if pluck deserves to win we certainly ought to see the America Cup home again this autumn.

For the thirteenth time America is called upon to defend her cup, there having been twelve unsuccessful challenges in the history of the race. Since 1895 no yacht owner but Sir Thomas has endeavoured to cope with the unequal conditions, and so far his attempts to capture the cup (which, by the way, is itself only valued at £100) have cost him something like £350,000. May the *Shamrock IV.* bring him his reward!

It is probable that if the cup did return to be sailed for in British waters challenges would become more frequent, and we should see countries other than Great Britain and America competing for supremacy. The journey across the Atlantic is the main difficulty that confronts continental yachtsmen, and they can scarcely be blamed if they decline to let a delicate racing craft upon which they have spent many thousands of pounds suffer the countless perils of a long ocean voyage. Thousands of British sportsmen hope that the ambition of Sir Thomas's life will be achieved and that the America Cup will follow the Polo Cup here to merry England. As for the Davis Lawn Tennis Cup—well, they're pretty anxious for that in Australia, I understand. The United States are pretty busy just now defending their championship titles.

The very next time that anybody writes to say that the fierce light which beats upon the headgear of a man who is good at games is absolutely detrimental to his success in the more serious and intellectual matters of life, I shall refer that correspondent to the case of E. A. Simson, of Wellington College. E. A. Simson is now the proud possessor of the King's medal, which was handed to him on Speech Day by Lord Derby. He also took prizes for Latin prose and Latin hexameters, and secured both the Wellesley and the Benson Scholarships. Still his list of successes is not complete, for he also gained a scholarship at Magdalen College. The Head especially complimented Simson on the great help he had been to him as the head of the school. And Simson was captain of cricket and captain of Rugger, and a prominent man in other games as well. Some people are never tired of saying that to excel in sport you must neglect your work, but somehow Simson's athletic responsibilities didn't seem to get over much in his way.

Those of you who follow school cricket keenly will be very glad to hear of the publication of "The Public School Cricket Year Book," which is as complete a record of school games as Wisden's Almanac is of first-class and county cricket. Mr. A. W. Lane Joynt, who is responsible for the production, has done his work exceedingly well, and besides the many pages devoted to reviews, results, averages, and so on, there are several special articles of particular interest, such as "The Advantage of Coaching at Cricket, and Some Suggestions to Coaches," by Captain E. S. Wynyard; "Young Amateurs at the Oval," by A. W. F. Rutty; and "Lord's and the Public Schools," by A. C. M. Croome. The last-named reminds us that "the service which the M.C.C. renders to public school cricket is by no means limited to the loan of its ground during August Bank Holiday week for school matches. Every year during the Easter holidays arrangements are made whereby the sons of members can be coached in Lord's. These arrangements are admirable in their thoroughness." In the course of a most interesting article Mr. Croome remarks, "Some people hold that it is not good for a youngster's moral character if he is allowed to play his games in public. Not all head masters are keen to get a Lord's match for their school teams. They would change their minds if they realised what it means to make acquaintance with the Lord's traditions. Everyone who has played there, from W. G. downwards, has felt in his bones how much greater is the game of cricket than any individual cricketer. For schoolboys a Lord's match is the antidote not the cause of bumptiousness. So it is with the Easter practice. I fancy that boys who have already got their colours at school are not supposed to take part in it. The opportunity is for those whose ambitions are still to be realised. They are taught, as nowhere else, that success depends on keenness and persistency just as much as on the correct manipulation of the bat. Captain Wynyard is out on the practice ground all day, and his personality pervades the place. There is abundant tolerance for honest incapacity, but woe betide anybody who is late for his practice or shows the least sign of slackness. And the director of the proceedings has eyes in the back of his head. While he is conducting a fielding practice in the centre of the ground he manages to see exactly what

From a photo by J Soame.] [*After the painting by A. J. Nowell.*

The Rev. St. J. B. Wynne Willson, Master of Marlborough College.

is happening in a dozen nets surrounding it on all sides. Nor does he ever forget his impressions of any youngster who has ever come under his notice. The result is that he can tell at a glance whether the proper amount of progress is being made in this or that net. If he is dissatisfied he strolls across to the place, and in a minute or two the coach gets the needed hint, or the pupil hears the winged words which suit his case. The consequence is that year by year an increasing number of boys go back to the public schools with their minds informed by a knowledge of the true methods of playing the game, and diffuse it consciously or unconsciously among their fellows. Possibly some of them are soon choked off from conscious missionary work. It is easy to imagine that drastic measures would be taken to silence a small boy prone to talk overmuch about 'what we do at Lord's.' But the unconscious leavening of the lump is what counts. Lord's must by now be indirectly responsible for the diminution of the ragging which spoils so many lower-boy games, even in the best regulated schools."

This excellent little shilling book contains many photographs of school teams and school captains, and deserves a place not only in the library of every school but in the home of all keen cricketers. And, by the way, the editor concludes by asking that all information concerning this season's cricket should be sent him as soon as possible, so that he may have time to prepare it for the 1915 year book. We have much pleasure in reminding school captains, secretaries, and games masters of this request.

Answers to Correspondents

School Sports Results

COLCHESTER ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL.—*Long Jump:* S. W. Lord, 17ft. 4½ins. *High Jump:* S. W. Lord, 4ft. 7ins. 100 *Yards:* W. N. Town, 11⅘ secs. *Quarter Mile:* C. E. F. Everett, 60secs. *Half Mile:* E. J. Brand, 2mins. 19⅕secs. *Mile:* C. E. F. Everett, 5mins. 10⅕secs. *Hurdles:* W. N Town, 19⅕secs.

DOUAI ABBEY SCHOOL (Woolhampton).—*Long Jump:* T. Swarbrick, 18ft. 6ins. *High Jump:* L. Wharton, 4ft. 10½ins. 100 *Yards:* L. Wharton, 11secs. *Quarter Mile:* L. Wharton, 59⅖secs. *Half Mile:* T. Swarbrick, 2mins. 19⅕secs. *Mile:* R. Waldsmith, 5mins. 27⅕secs. *Hurdles:* L. Wharton, 20⅗secs.

HEVERSHAM GRAMMAR SCHOOL.—*Long Jump:* W. B. Holmes, 18ft. 11½ins. *High Jump:* R. E. D. Taylor, 4ft. 7½ins. 100 *Yards:* W. B. Holmes, 11secs. *Quarter Mile:* W. B. Holmes, 60⅗secs. *Half Mile:* R. B. Sutton, 2mins. 23secs. *Mile:* R. B. Sutton, 5mins. 14secs.

KING EDWARD VI's SCHOOL (Birmingham).—*Long Jump:* H. E. Wootton, 16ft. 9ins. *High Jump:* A. R. W. Hutchinson and H. C. Bryant, 4ft. 9ins. 100 *Yards:* V. C. Legg, 11secs. *Quarter Mile:* V. C. Legg, 60⅗secs. *Half Mile:* F. E. Keep, 2mins. 25secs. *Mile:* H. E. Wootton, 5mins. 6secs. (school record). *Hurdles:* V. C. Legg, 17⅕secs.

ST. OLAVE'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL.—*Long Jump:* H. B. Ryley, 17ft. 10½ins. *High Jump:* J. R. Skinner, 4ft. 7ins. 100 *Yards:* E. M. Schumer, 11secs. *Quarter Mile:* F. G. Parker, 61secs. *Half Mile:* K. M. Lindsay, 2mins. 23secs. *Mile:* G. Campbell, 5mins. 11secs. *Hurdles:* F. G. Palmer, 19secs. (school record).

BIRMINGHAM INTER-SCHOOL SPORTS. — *Donor's Cup for One Mile Team Race:* Handsworth Grammar School. *Schools Cup for Quarter Mile:* Handsworth Grammar School, 55secs. (record for these sports). *Coronation Cup for Mile:* King Edward VI's School, 5mins., 13secs. *Schools Cup for High Jump:* Handsworth Grammar School and George Dixon Grammar School (tie), 4ft. 7ins. *Lord Mayor's Cup for Long Jump:* King Edward's Grammar School, Aston. *Schools Cup for 100 Yards:* Handsworth Grammar School, 10⅘ secs. *Vice-President's Cup for Runners-up:* King Edward VI's Grammar School, Five Ways. *Kenrick Championship Shield:* Handsworth Grammar School.

General

A. Meggs.—The reason why the old-fashioned watches you mention are called "turnips" has nothing to do with the amount of "carrot" gold they contain, but is derived from their size and shape.

Minus.—In the circumstances, I do not advise you to make the venture your two friends propose. As regards learning to swim, you should first consult your medical adviser.

D. M. T. (Ealing).—Glad you like our stories and articles. There should be plenty of bookbinders in your district who would bind your CAPTAIN for you. Most newsagents could tell you of one.

T. H. M. (Leeds).—Thanks for kind invitation. Had I been anywhere near Clapham (Lancaster) on the date you mention I would have forgetten my aged digestive organs and looked around for "Walker's Tent" and that spread you promised. But I was miles nearer Clapham (London). Here are the titles of some books by S. R. Crockett: "The Stickit Minister," "Ione March," "Lad's Love," "The Banner of Blue," "Raiderland," "Maid Margaret," "Lochinvar," "The Red Axe," "Silver Skull," "Cleg Kelly," "Strong Mac." There are others—plenty of them—but these should keep you going for a while.

Ex-Irregular Trooper (Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles). writes me from Johannesburg a long and interesting letter, which I have not space to quote from, warning young Britons against emigrating to South Africa.

G. E. Brown (Dunedin).—The story you name appeared in Vol. XVI. of THE CAPTAIN. This is out of print, but if I can put you in the way of getting a copy I will. A paragraph in the Captain Club pages this month may interest you.

THE OLD FAG

THE TRUE SPORTING INSTINCT

The Castaway: "Well, I *might* have been able to get a bit o' fishin' if I hadn't had the jolly hard luck to lose all my tackle in the wreck"

Crane pounced forward as the ball broke loose, and flung it straight and true for the goal.

THE BROTHERLY EYE

A Water-Polo Story

By HYLTON CLEAVER

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell

I

WHEN a "Constant Reader" forwards his theory to the Press gratis, or an incipient debater, leaping to his feet, expounds his logic, each seeking to prove the disadvantage of being a day boy at a public school, seize, reader, your own pen, or in your turn bound from your seat with tousled hair, and point to the case of Templebury, that great, grey school in the heart of London that knows no boarders, but whose Old Boys are amongst the first in the land.

Now there is much to be said for and against the day boy, but the chief points are these. On the one hand your day boy has the immense advantage of the home commissariat, and on the other he bows his head 'neath that yoke of the elder brother, which without doubt constitutes a crying evil. They are such big, patronising, hard-hearted, heavy-punching brutes, these elder brothers, with their plenteous cash and their irritating manner of knowing all, and of supposing the young 'un in all ways to be as imbecilic as they were themselves at school, as guilty as were they of all those things which they now assert that they never did or always did as the case may be, but of which the kid must be warned, accused, and found guilty. In the training of the public schools, as it differs between day boy and boarder, there are, in reality, but these two points. Your day boy—despite stupid statistics proving the contrary—is as good at games, as manly, as fond of sportive life as the other. All that matters is that your day boy has good grub, *but* big brothers. Take the case, then, of Templebury, and of Templeburian A. E. Crane (present) and Templeburian B. H. Crane (past); but, before you take it altogether, let me tell you the whole story.

Templebury is a great swimming school. St. Paul's box, Radley row, Bedford play Rugger, Templeburians swim—all of them; the "Otter" bring down their strongest team, both 'Varsities look forward to the match; sometimes men play polo for counties, or win big swimming races whilst still at school. Swimming is in the atmosphere. Men with their hair cropped close to the head, to prevent it flopping over their eyes in the water, stand about by the notice-boards in the entrance hall, practising breath-holding; their whole appearance suggesting to you, as you step inside, that they will swim you a mile for twopence. At the luncheon interval fifty enormous drain-pipe contrivances fill the baths in two minutes, and the whole school flop in shoulder to shoulder. Late comers think themselves lucky if they may but lean over the side and wet their fingers, so priceless is the water—well, no, not quite that; I am running away with myself. Still, anyway, that's the idea. To swim or to play water-polo for Templebury, then, is an honour coveted more highly in proportion to other games than at any other school. Swimming colours are an immense asset to the would-be blood.

One bright morning, A. E. Crane leaned casually against a radiator in one of the school corridors; under one arm he carried a few books, with his free hand he smote his friend Shanklin upon the shoulder, making the while the following sensational statement:—

"Cabbage Face, it's come. They've stuck me down to play."

"Place your hand there," said Shanklin, indicating the palm of his right hand.

Crane did so.

"You're madly bucked, of course?" said Shanklin. "Your brother will be bucked, too—what?"

The other looked pensive.

"Secretly," said he, "he probably will; outwardly he will be restrained. He'll say, 'Mind you don't lose your head, that's all. It's a fatal thing to put on a bit of side because you've got a trial in the team. Play as well as you can, and keep your mouth shut. Show you're keen. Above all, don't swank!' Then he'll recall some chap who once put on side and got

frightfully kicked, and tell me his own life history to date. No, I don't think I shall *run* home and tell him. Let him find out for himself."

"You don't seem to hero-worship this brother of yours to any very startling extent," said Shanklin.

"He's all right," said Crane. "He means well; but there's too much of the elder brother about him. He thinks you can't have any success without being in peril of becoming a swanker. He sort of peers at you all the time, to see if you're putting on side, follows you about telling you anecdotes of men who have been ruined by swollen heads; home truths squeeze themselves into everything he tells you."

"Rather futile," said Shanklin, "because I don't know any other chap in the school that's less likely to swank than you. You're *too* modest."

"Don't rot."

"I'm not rotting."

"If you hear of a competition for shy violets, then let me know" said Crane. "But I mean," he went on, "anyway, if it was so my brother would put it down to his treatment."

"Where are they going to play you?"

"Right back—same old place—my brother plays there, you know, and I've sort of learned the job from him."

"Who are we up against?"

"We are up," said Crane, "right up—against the Waterfowls. And Rah! Rah! They are hot stuff!"

"I'll roll along and lend a little tone to the audience," said Shanklin.

"Half a tone flat," said Crane, "in the shouting, I suppose?"

He was a little mad that day.

"I shall come early," said Shanklin, "bringing a length of twine and a hook, in case you sink like a stone at a critical moment."

* * * * *

Saturday came. As one grows older, one finds comes pretty regularly. When the hour was ripe, the usual great crowd swarmed into the baths in good time and filled the balcony. First came swimming races, in which Crane took no part. The school lost by two events to one, and looked to the water-polo to level up the score. The rival captains murmured a few remarks upholding the glory of the game, and the Waterfowl spun a coin, then, as the school team dived into the bath and swam to the shallow end, which they were defending first, Templebury's hopes were signalled by a loud cheer contributed by those who from the balcony above gazed down into the clear water, waiting calmly enough for the churning that the game must bring. At either end the teams gripped the hand rail in readiness for the race for the ball.

A. E. Crane, the embodiment of modesty, despite his scanty attire, looked up at his chum, and grinned. Shanklin grinned back, understanding.

Your footballer will shake his head solemnly and pretend not to understand the man who can be keen on water-polo. Your golfer will smile in his superiority, asserting that, anyway, it is "not like golf"; but to the swimmer water-polo is as much the game as cricket is to the cricketer, or cribbage to the maiden aunt, and he strives for honours at the sport as strenuously as he may. He, no less than the Rugger man, dreams of a county yearning for his services, of International games incomplete without his august figure squirming in the water. And A. E. Crane held the bar now ready, aye ready, for his first trial for the school.

Water-polo was *his* game; it had been his brother's.

He grinned because of his modesty, but in his heart he felt very grim, very determined.

The referee on the side of the bath gazed searchingly at the players, blew his whistle, and lobbed the ball into the water. Like dashing torpedoes, the figures at either end, leashed from the bar, trudged madly towards the centre. From that moment A. E. Crane forgot Shanklin and his grin, remembering only that he longed for the school colours that his brother had worn before, that he longed also to wear these without swank, proving his worth in the family circle.

He found himself marking a large fair-haired man—the Waterfowls' left-wing forward—who from the start bobbed about unceasingly, putting in a dash here and a dash there, chattering immoderately the while, and he noted this man's build, and reckoned that his own light weight put him at a disadvantage. All these little things are magnified when a man is playing for his place. The school got to the ball first, and Humphreys on the right wing passed back; the left back took it safely, judged his distance, and slung it up to the wing forward, who put in a shot that was saved. Then the ball came out to the fair-haired man, who started a dribble. Crane was up and on to his man at once; but as he reached for the ball he found himself whirled aside roughly, and before he could come again, his man had passed the ball and was trudging away towards goal at top speed.

The school stemmed the attack, and getting the ball, took it into the enemy's quarters, and after some clever passing scored a well-schemed goal. After this, Crane stuck to his man closely. Where he dashed Crane dashed too, and in actual play he was up to most of his tricks. Once, however, he found the fair man patting the ball from one hand to the other over his head as he tackled him; and when, reaching for it, he had nearly scooped it away, he felt a muscular arm come over his shoulder, and thrust him deep under as if in the course of a stroke.

Two minutes later a scientifically unintentional kick below the belt as he grabbed the ball just out of the other's reach, brought the fact sharply to his notice that he was up against a dreaded danger in water-polo—the skilful fouler. He did not funk, although he realised at once that in this case the game was not going to be very enjoyable for him. He sighed, too, to think that luck should have brought him this man to mark just when he was being tried for the school, and on the one day when the referee was Beetle Summers, a very *passé* swimming master, whose excessive melancholy was only equalled by his apparent short-sightedness at moments of excitement, and by his marked inability. Now and then Crane had a chance himself and tried to cut out an opening; but the fair man was usually on the spot, and, finding his weight useful, he generally worried the ball away before the other could pass.

Soon Crane became ready for rough play each time that he had the ball, or went to tackle his man, and this had the effect of making him seem slow. The fouling, withal, was annoyingly scientific, and occasionally when the referee happened to be minding his business, or others were near, a "Sorry!" (blurted out as he crawled away after a tackle) made it appear unintentional; and your schoolboy has a deep-rooted objection to claiming fouls.

At half-time, Crane, sore and winded, sat on the side of the bath, and felt miserable.

Nobody condoled with him. Nobody appeared to have noticed the odds under which he was labouring. On the contrary, there was a sort of unpleasant quietness in the school team. Nobody clapped him on the shoulder, asserting that he was playing the game of his life, and this lack of friendly enthusiasm made him feel that his form must seem disappointing to others, and at the change of ends he determined to go all out whilst he could last. Evidently it had been seen that he was not tackling his man successfully, or feeding his forwards skilfully enough. On the face of things there was no particular reason why he should not have complained to the school captain or to the referee; but by a mysterious unwritten law common to most schools he could not do this. A man being tried for a school team is not supposed to approach his captain at half-time and make excuses. He must be judged from the outside point of view, and entirely on his playing merits. He must say no word in or against his favour. He is chosen to play; he turns up with the other men, changes, plays, changes back. It should all be done unostentatiously and modestly. Theoretically the man is not supposed to know that he is being tried and watched. He has just been asked to take part in the game. Therefore Crane held his peace, and at the whistle dived back to his work, unpleasant as it was, and his look was grim and stoical.

Almost at once the ball flopped into the fair man's hands, and Crane darted at him; then finding him just about to shoot he threw his weight on to the other man's shoulders. The tackle was too late to allow him to get the ball, but he was successful in making his man bungle the shot, and a feeling of satisfaction brought chirpiness into his heart. A minute later the ball came at his head, slung back by one of his own forwards, and as he took it he saw in one quick glance that the fair man was coming. He slipped to one side, made a vain effort to dribble the ball across the bath; the other man anticipated the move and pounced on him just as he had patted the ball out of reach. His mouth opening in an involuntary effort to shout "Foul!" took in a gallon of water. He came up gulping, and saw that the game had gone on, and that the hated fouler was engaged in scoring a goal. Hopes, fears, dreads, ambitions were closing in on Crane now. The day that a man is tried for colours strains his nerves of its own accord; little things, happening afterwards, worry him almost unreasonably. If luck favours him, he feels that he has played well, and he laughs and jokes hysterically for hours afterwards. Misfortune thrusts him deep down into despair; he foresees scathing comments in the school magazine wherein he had hoped to read glowing reports on his play—he realises that he will never play again for his pet team. Something of this pessimism became manifest hereafter in Crane's play. He dashed at his man almost irritably, and sly blows and thrusts only served to infuriate him. Towards the end of the game he nearly lost his head, and struck back

surreptitiously at his opponent; but he remembered himself in time, and gave the other no chance to complain. Twice in the game the referee had pulled up the "Waterfowl" for a breach of the rules, but his consistent and unnecessary roughness was so skilful that for the most part it passed unnoticed.

Soon Crane, who had looked forward to this game like any city clerk counting the days to his annual week's holiday, found himself wishing the end would come. But before time brought him relief he had one more chance. The Waterfowl forwards brought the ball down the bath by clever combination. Crane waited his chance, then at the right moment his shoulders came out of the water as he jumped at the ball, interrupting a final pass to the fair man. A bursting cheer from the gallery encouraged him. He gathered the ball for a long pass up to his own forwards; held on a second too late—then again that long, heavy arm came over his shoulder, an elbow in the back of the neck made him turn sharply; the ball slipped from his grasp. In a flash the other man had seized it and passed up to the mouth of the goal, whence a waiting Waterfowl slung it in home. Then, none too soon, time came to bring Crane escape from what he felt was ignominy. He dried and changed moodily, and, having dressed, he was making towards the basket in which used towels were thrown, when Shanklin came up.

"Well played," said he, heartily; "well played indeed."

Crane glared at him.

"Well played," said Shanklin again; "well p—— What's the matter?"

"You're talking through your hat," said Crane, icily, "or else you know even less about the game than Beetle Summers."

"You *were* good," said the other, defiantly.

"I was nothing of the sort," said Crane, "and you know it. I was rank. The man I was marking ought to play Soccer for the Butchers' Early Closing, I should think."

"Bear up slightly," said Shanklin, attempting to be jaunty. "Let's see what a dish of tea will do for you. Things are not so utterly grey as you think. I watched you closely—your play was most darned skilful."

"You don't know anything about it," said Crane, shortly.

"I've learned a good deal this afternoon, anyway," pleaded Shanklin.

"So have I," said Crane, heavily. "So have I."

II

Homeward he went, and in the small room wherein he was wont to find such seclusion as homework required, he sat that evening, hands in pockets, a melancholy scowl darkening his countenance. Now and again he rose peevishly, and stood before the bookcase glowering at his favourite books. Here and there he selected one, and looked through its pages disinterestedly. Barrack Room Ballads had no power to stir him; he no longer found humour in his old friend Psmith—every page seemed heavily stamped with the certainty that his trial had gone against him.

Presently he heard the front door open, and a bag dumped down the hall. Then a voice commenced to chant the fact that the owner could "see red roses blooming." The peculiarly droning nature of the gentleman's voice betokened the fact that the elder brother had come home. A. E. Crane stood with his back against the window and waited, listening. He heard a letter being opened, then footsteps commenced to mount the staircase.

A few seconds later the door of his small room was unceremoniously banged open, and B. H. stood in the doorway.

"Hullo!" said he.

"Hullo," said the other, mournfully.

B. H. looked at him intently.

"Say it again," said he; "say it a little more brightly. Take a deep breath. Like this: '*H*ullo!' So—twig?"

A. E. was silent.

"What's the matter?" said the elder brother. "Swallowed your tooth-stopping?"

"Not?" he continued, after waiting in vain for an answer. "Miserable 'cause you haven't I s'pose?"

"Don't be a fool," said A. E. "I've just been playing water-polo."

B. H. came well into the room and picked up a book from the table.

"'The Dare Devil of the School,'" said he. "H'm! What's he got a scarlet face and a yellow shirt for? Seems silly, doesn't it? What's that—a cricket bat or a magnified cheese straw?"

"For the school," said A. E.

"What? No—this thing he's holding—here."

"I have just," said A. E., determinedly, "played water-polo for the school."

B. H. put down the book and stood arms akimbo, and looked at his brother appraisingly.

"Then why," said he, "why on earth couldn't

you say so before? Why not let the news leak out? Why all this sensational last-minute-stop-press report after the event?"

A. E. still regarded the pattern of the carpet fretfully.

"You look disheartened," said B. H. "What did you do—hit your head on the bottom when you dived in, and took no further part in the game?"

"No, you ass," said A. E., without reverence of any kind.

"I tell you what," said his brother. "Why not step over here, and have one good cry on my shoulder before blurting out the whole shocking story—what?"

"The matter," said A. E., with sudden determination, "is this: I was playing my first game for the school, and I had to mark a great beast who fouled the whole way through."

"The referee being?"

"Beetle."

"Enough said. You have my sympathy. Didn't anyone else see?"

A. E. shrugged his shoulders.

"They never do," said he; "they're too busy marking their own men. Besides, he was a skilful hog. Sly kicks in the stomach when he took a high pass, you know; shoving me under, with a nobbly elbow in the back of my neck—all that sort of thing."

"Who were you playing?"

"The Waterfowls," said A. E.

B. H. started, and gazed earnestly out of the window for a moment, then turned sharply, and looked searchingly at A. E.

"The Waterfowls?" he repeated.

A. E. nodded sadly.

"You say you played badly?"

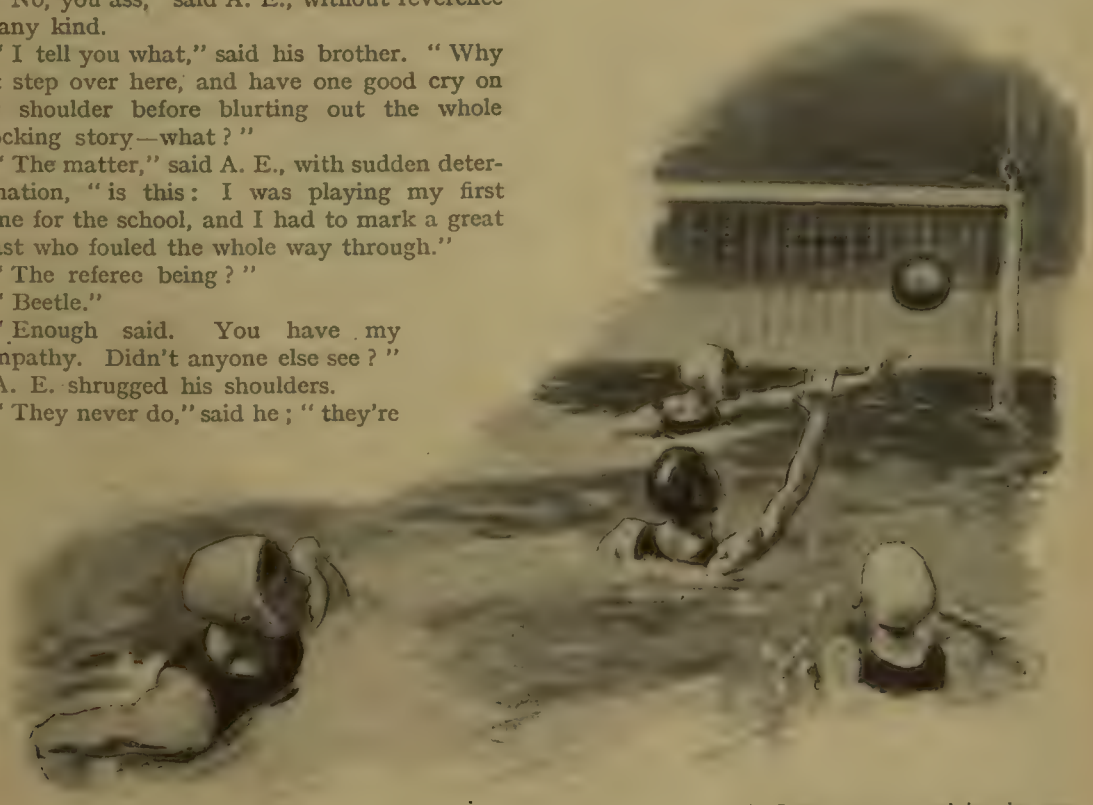
"Well, I s'pose it looked like it," said A. E.; "that's what I mean."

"I see what you mean," said B. H. "You were being tried for the school, and you wanted to do well. Instead you were off form. I hope you didn't complain to Peterson or anything?"

"I didn't to Peterson," said A. E. "I told one or two pals about it."

"I'm sorry for that," said B. H.

"Why—what d'you mean?"



As Crane came up, gulping, he saw that the man who had fouled him had scored.

"I mean," said B. H., "it's—it's a poor excuse."

"A *what?*"

"A poor excuse," repeated the elder brother. His expression had a touch of the hardness with which a master, cane in hand, regards a wayward pupil.

"What on earth d'you mean?" demanded A. E.

"Was he a fair man?" asked B. H.

A. E. nodded.

"Then I happen to know," said the elder brother, somewhat importantly, "that you're wrong. The man wasn't fouling. He may have been playing hard—you mustn't mind

that. Water-polo's a pretty tough game. I wish you'd told me you were playing against the Waterfowls. It's stupid to hide things of that kind, and then blurt them out suddenly when it's too late for people to help. Sensational, I dare say, but idiotic all the same."

"D'you mean," said A. E., tensely, "that you don't believe he *was* fouling? D'you mean *that?*"

B. H. hedged slightly.

"You may have thought so," said he, "but that's not the same thing. You say the ref. didn't haul him up—that nobody else saw. You know you were keen to play well, disappointed that you didn't. I say I'm sorry to hear you make a feeble excuse for being off form. That sort of thing's not done, you know. It's swank. People don't want others to think they're playing rottenly, so they say the other man was fouling. When boxers get beaten you generally find them rushing off to the papers to make statements to the effect that they were badly fouled early on. See what I mean?"

"You think I'm merely making excuses?" said A. E., savagely.

"A lot of people do it," said B. H., "but I don't like to find you falling in with them."

"You're a cad!" said A. E., bitterly.

"I'm sorry you think that," was the answer. "I've always tried to teach you not to swank. I thought you were growing more level-headed."

"How can you possibly know whether he was fouling or not?"

"Never mind that now," said B. H. "I'll tell you another time. I can't at present."

There was a heavy, awkward silence.

Then a gong downstairs came to the rescue.

B. H. listened intently, in the manner of an old lady hearkening to church bells over the hills.

"That," said he, more genially, "seems to be a gong. I s'pose it means grub. Thank goodness one does get decent food at home, anyway. Come on, I'm ready for it."

III

"How could he know?" said Shanklin, when A. E. told him the story on the following Monday morning. "It's absurd. He wasn't there."

"He says he can't tell me now—put on a rather mysterious air; but he seemed pretty sick with me. Said it was a rotten excuse. Said I only thought the man fouled because I was off-form."

"Still," said Shanklin, "you say he's often like that."

"He's not so obviously sick as a rule. He mouths a bit, and rolls his eyes—and——"

"Rolls his eyes!" said Shanklin. "Ho! Come, come, come! Rolls his r's, you mean You *dot* your i's."

"I'll dot yours in a minute," said Crane. "Can't you be sensible?"

"And so," said Shanklin, gravely, "you are fed up."

"I am," said Crane; "right up to the neck."

"Well, keep up a grin; don't let anyone know. It'll pass away."

"I think you'd better pass away," said Crane; "you rather annoy me. You're such a silly ass."

"Sorry," said the other. "I'll be getting along then."

Left alone, Crane went to his locker and got out his books, then he strolled towards his classroom, and waited outside with a few others for the form-master. It was a dull, grey morning, in keeping with his spirits. He felt worried, too. A brother to whom you tell a pathetic story of the man who fouled you may perhaps indulge in a little light chaff; he may even patronisingly give you certain tips as to how you may learn to get your own back on other foulers as they appear from time to time. But he does not deliberately doubt your words. He does not as a rule say, "You are wrong. I happen to know that he couldn't have been fouling!" There was mystery in the air. Misery and depression too. Things were going wrong. It is enough to play in a trial for your place, and to be put off your game. But in such cases, surely, one may expect reasonable sympathy.

Monday dragged through. In the evening, B. H. adopted a cool, schoolmasterly attitude towards his brother that flicked A. E. on the raw, not once but many times. Tuesday and Wednesday came, and, like Monday, dragged out their weary hours. On Thursday, the water-polo and swimming teams were chosen, and the names of those selected put up on the notice-board. On that day, therefore, A. E. went to school even more depressed than before. It is not nice to know that you have bungled your trial, but to find the fact announced to the whole school by means of a simple sheet of paper on which your name does not appear is even more trying still.

He dare not wait with the other enthusiasts who were hanging about by the notice-board during the luncheon hour for Peterson to come with his notice. He wandered away into

the playing fields. One gets, of course, a distorted view of these things. Prejudice against one's self makes a fair criticism of one's own play impossible when depression has set in. When, therefore, he saw Shanklin leaning out of a corridor window and waving to him frantically, it did not at first occur to A. E. that his friend might have news. He merely supposed that he had been caught by the trousers when leaning too far out. With supposed rescue work awaiting him, he hurried into the school. To his surprise, Shanklin met him in the entrance hall as he came up at the double.

"You're down to play," he explained, wildly.

"Eh?" said Crane.

"Down to play," said Shanklin. "You—water-polo. You're playing—on Saturday, you know."

"Me—again?"

"Rather!" said Shanklin, dancing about in his excitement.

"You're ragging."

"Not I. It's out of date. This is the Tango."

Crane turned dazedly, and went towards the notice-board. Over a bevy of heads he could just see the notice, and on the list he read his name.

Suddenly the greyness of the day seemed to disappear. Everything, even the heavy clouds in the sky, signalled great joy to A. E. Crane.

That evening he hurried home. Even then he had to wait a couple of hours before B. H. put in an appearance.

A. E. met him in the hall.

The memory of that other evening was still buzzing in his brain. "A poor excuse; he wasn't fouling," and the hated word "swank" kept on flashing before his mind's eye in turn, in the manner of the electric signs one sees from Waterloo Bridge. They had haunted him all the week. Now the way of making good was opening up smoothly before him. And though he was very furious with B. H. he still had some respect left for him, realising that he typified in many ways the public-school spirit which teaches a man things, and knocks him about. So it was with a certain quaintly proud delight that he told him the news.

"I'm playing again on Saturday," he said, none too steadily.

"Are you?" said B. H., without surprise. "I'll try to turn up. What's on for dinner, mater?"

And by degrees, as he grew to realise what this second chance meant, there surged upon A. E. the feeling of astounding relief that must come to a golfer who in a dream foozles a three-inch putt, and is unaccountably allowed another shot.

He slept well that night.

IV

LEGEND tells of a certain sea captain who, annoyed at the foulness of the weather, swore that he would round the Cape though it took him till the Day of Judgment. Something akin to this splendid determination of the Flying Dutchman bubbled and squeaked within A. E. Crane on that great Saturday when his real chance came. The match was against the Old Harleyans, and, as he undressed, he knew that he was gaily confident, and certain to play up to form. Such a feeling helps a man no end. Whereas, before, he had been over-anxious and highly strung, he was now as keen to get into the water as if a mere practice swim were in store.

B. H. had not yet put in an appearance, but the usual enthusiasts were filing into the gallery, ready to criticise or applaud as the occasion demanded, and, when at last both teams were ready, he dived in delightedly, feeling as the water closed round him almost as cosy as a child being tucked into bed. If ever a man felt in form, this was A. E.'s day.

At the whistle, the usual scurry and dash took place before men paired off, but when Crane got to his man he found him big again, and with a blue skull cap. Very soon he proved himself a fine swimmer of terrific pace, ambi-dextrous in handling the ball, clever and tricky in passing, and, above all, essentially clean and fair. But Crane, realising as he did that he was up against something, never wavered. He, too, was good, and with a back-flip well known at the school as his favourite shot. He marked his man cheerfully, whole-heartedly, and cleanly. Within a couple of minutes he had tackled him when in a good position for scoring, and stolen the ball. He hung on to him with something of the enthusiasm of a bull-dog after a tramp. The Old Harleyan, finding himself harried at every turn by this pungent tackler, grinned philosophically, and played the harder. Twice he managed to sling the ball back and get up to goal in time to take a pass and score, but this only because he had been lucky in the first place, and in the race for goal was too fast for Crane.

His team seemed to play to him. They were good, but he was better, and on the whole the school were hard put to it. Several times

Crane got the ball and tried to feed his forwards, but as a rule he was successfully ducked before he had time to measure the distance, and the ball falling short of its destination was as often as not seized and dribbled down the bath towards the school goal. Manners in goal was great. Over and over again he stopped far hotter shots than a schoolboy is used to, with ease. Peterson and Humphreys in the forward line worked nobly from start to finish. But casting a critical eye over the team, each onlooker selected Crane as the pick of the bunch. The man he was marking was conspicuous by his brilliance, and therefore brought Crane's fine tackling and tireless energy into the limelight. A bigger, faster man than A. E., he was yet not by so very much the better man on the day's play, save by reason of his size and pace. In the second half Crane's chance came. The ball was passed to his man, who took it and prepared for a shot at goal. A. E. pounced and bore him under. The ball broke loose, and he pounced again. It was safe in his grasp. Without a moment's delay his right hand twisted it round, and his arm shot out and swung round; the ball sped straight and true, and banged into the Old Harleyan goal. It was as perfect a back-flip as the school had seen for many a day, and accordingly cheers greeted him—many cheers, loud cheers, and much banging and clattering of boots on the balcony. Here and there a master smiled approvingly. Crane went on. The good work, once set in motion, must, he thought, be kept well on the move. Twice more he took the ball cleanly away from his man when he was dribbling it contentedly towards goal. Once he nearly scored again himself. Then, suddenly, just as he was feeling that he should never play again like this in his life, as men in form generally do, time came, and he clambered soberly out of the bath, just as B. H. came up to the side to welcome him.

"Well played!" said he. "Jolly well played! *You're* all right. You won't be 'tried' again. You'll condescend to turn out. Better get dressed now. I'll wait for you."

A. E. dressed happily. A strange desire came over him to carol, but he choked back his song. Then the sudden, inexplicable loss of his collar-stud sobered him a little. He bent down and thrust his head into the corners under his bench unavailingly. At last, in despair, he sallied out of his box with tousled hair and his bootlaces undone, to seek help from Bates, the attendant. He strolled along beside the bath whistling. Down by Bates's little cabin the man that he had marked so tenaciously stood talking to B. H., whose attitude represented a strange mixture of surprise and querulous despair.

As he came towards them, B. H. shot out a hand, and gripped him by the shoulder.

"Arthur," said he, "you probably didn't know—this is Venables, the famous county skipper——" He hesitated awkwardly.

A. E. extended a hand respectfully. He also grinned.

"By Jove!" said he. "No wonder you were so fine. Fancy me trying to stop you."

"You did," said the amiable Venables. "You did it jolly effectively, too. You're about one of the best school backs going, I should think. D'you think you could get away to play for the county?"

"Eh?" said Crane. "What—the county?"

"Yes; we're looking out for a class back. I'll drop you a line, shall I?"

A. E. strove to speak. For a while he searched the depths of his soul for something suitable to say. Then he noticed that Venables and his brother were chatting together affably and not noticing him. So he staggered away. When he got home to his box, he remembered his stud again, and turned back to seek Bates. As he reached the end of the baths this time he found that Venables had gone to dress and his brother was alone.

Again the fraternal hand reached out, and gathered him in. Then B. H. looked at him quizzically.

"Look here," said he, "I'm sorry, young Arthur."

"What about?" said A. E.

"All that rot I talked," B. H. explained, "the other day, about the man who fouled, you know."

"That's all right," said A. E.

"It was like this," explained the elder brother. "It wasn't altogether my fault. I know Venables, and I met him some weeks ago and had grub with him. He was talking about swimming, and said the county were looking out for a class back, and he'd decided to try the schools and to play against them himself, and notice chaps. I mentioned your name, and swore not to say a word about it. He told me he was going to play left wing for the Waterfowls. You see, he's a fair man, too. Now it seems that the Old Harleyans wanted his help, and he found they were playing all the schools that he wanted to try, so he turned out for them instead. I didn't know, and when I heard you had to mark a fair chap, left wing for the

Waterfowls, I naturally thought it was Venables. And, of course, I knew *he* wouldn't foul. Like an ass, I thought you'd found he was too good for you, and—er—didn't like it."

"Of course," said A. E., magnanimously, "anyone else would have thought so too."

"I was talking also to Peterson," continued B. H., "and he said you were jolly fine last week. What made you think you were rotten?"

"Oh, I got the hump!" said A. E.

There was a long silence. The younger brother turned and started to look about on Bates' table for a stud.

"You've done jolly well," said B. H., presently. "It's great. The only thing now is to keep your head. *I've* never got tried for the county, and you might get over excited. I tell you this for your own good. Side is such an abominable thing, you see. I mean, there's no need to start——"

Then he stopped short, and grew a little red in the face, as if suddenly remembering something.

"Confound it!" said he. "I don't mean that. What a goat I am! Seems to me it's you that can teach *me* a few things. Good old Arthur; put it there, will you?"

A. E. obliged. There was no swank about Arthur.

THE END

AN ANXIOUS MOMENT

Enthusiastic Snapshotter (with only one film left, to Parkinson, who has lost his foothold): "Are you going to drop, old man, or shall I take you now?"

OLD KIATSEE

By H. MORTIMER BATTEN

Illustrated by Stanley L. Wood

I

"HI-O! Hi-o! Ce-la!" The Indian crouched low in his saddle, whispering the words of encouragement in the ear of his cayuse. Behind him rode a young white man who wore the silk bandanna and white chaparejos of the prairie range owner. The two rode for their lives, and well they knew it. Behind them, fast fading into distance across the sun-baked prairie, gleamed the white roofs of Porcupine City. Behind them, too, a cloud of dust rose heavenwards like the smoke of a prairie fire—dust that was pounded into the still air by the racing hoofs of fifty or more ponies, on which were mounted the choicest horsemen of Porcupine City.

The Indian—Tango by name—led the way. His face was towards the north, and now and then his eyes swept the hollows of the prairie as though in search of a trail to follow. Presently he turned to his partner. "We head for Land of Little Trees," he shouted, and Rhomer Still, the rancher, nodded.

"Don't care where it is," he answered, "so long as we get there mighty quick." And again he glanced apprehensively behind him at the cloud of dust rising heavenwards.

The trouble had begun just a month ago, when Wilson, of the Wilson House Hotel, borrowed Rhomer's best pony for a five days' trip into the hills. Wilson got back in record time, and when, an hour or so later, Rhomer went for his pony, he found the poor brute tied to the tethering post outside the hotel, and in so exhausted a state that it dropped when he tried to lead it away. There was blood about the pony's flanks, while the froth that still flecked its mouth was also tinged with crimson. After a struggle, Rhomer got the poor beast to his own corral across the bluff, and there a revolver shot speedily put an end to its misery.

The young ranch-owner was a hot-tempered man with a keen love for animals. Had Wilson shot the cayuse outright, Rhomer might have forgiven him, but to leave the poor brute lingering outside without attention, was an unpardonable act of cruelty. With something nearly akin to murder at his heart, he made his way to the Wilson House to interview the proprietor as dusk fell. Wilson was lolling behind the saloon counter, while the usual number of everyday idlers occupied the saloon.

For some moments Rhomer stared into the florid face of his opponent without speaking. Wilson was a veritable giant of a man, who could have crushed the young ranch-owner at a blow, and this state of affairs did not facilitate matters for the latter. The proprietor was the first to speak.

"Well, my man," he drawled, "you look kind of surprised to see me. Have a drink?"

"Not with you," growled Rhomer. "Swallow your own poisons. I just came for a word with you, Wilson."

"Kick it in," suggested the proprietor, idly blowing smoke-rings.

Rhomer glanced round at the assembly of faces now turned towards him, then he spoke: "I just want to tell you what I think of a man who borrows another man's cayuse, rides it to a standstill, then leaves it tied outside the verandah without saying a word to the owner. I just want to tell you that a man who'll do that sort of thing is about the meanest sort of grass snake that ever grovelled to do a sneaky trick."

"You allude to me?" asked Wilson, coolly.

"Sure I do. I've had to shoot that pony I lent you."

"So I'm a sneaking grass snake, am I?" Wilson pursued, again blowing smoke-rings.

"You're worse!" hissed Rhomer, nettled by the man's cool insolence. "A grass snake *is* a clean-minded beast, anyway."

The proprietor said never a word, but calmly reached a heavy pint pot from the shelf above him, and with a quick movement flicked it at Rhomer's head. The cowboy caught it with dexterous fingers and returned it with force—aiming not at his opponent but at the ornamented glass demijohn on the shelf above Wilson's head. The huge jar burst with a loud report, its contents swilling the bottles and glasses from the shelf below, while the falling fragments of glass added to the confusion. Wilson leapt the counter to avoid the avalanche. Rhomer was white with passion, though he stood coolly rolling a cigarette.

"Now we can talk business," he said, as the noise subsided. "We've settled that little deal, but if you want to throw anything else, choose something soft, else it will go through the large plate window."

"Settled it, have we?" hissed Wilson. "Guess that's up to me. You don't come breaking up my happy home without paying for it."

"Fair play, Wilson," said a fair-haired young cattle-puncher, evidently an Englishman, from a corner of the room. "If you throw things at him he isn't in honour bound to throw them back at you. He can choose his own target."

Wilson, who was in many ways a coward, saw at once that the general feeling of the room was against him, and at once changed his tone.

"Pity about that pony," he said. "Truth is, I was in a mighty hurry to get back——"

Rhomer Still blew a whiff of smoke contemptuously in the man's face. "That's a fine explanation, I must say. It was a mighty thoughtful thing to leave the poor brute tethered outside when you must have seen it was ridden to death—the sort of cruelty one doesn't run up against every day in the week, Wilson."

But Wilson's swagger was returning, and as all eyes turned towards him in anticipation of his reply, an insolent sneer curved his thick lips.

"What do you intend doing about it?" he inquired. "Are you going to law, or are you going to give me a good hiding?"

A titter of amusement went round the room. Most of the men present were of the idle, touting class, who were only too glad of an opportunity of taking the part of the proprietor. Wilson's suggestion was obviously absurd. There was no law to deal with such matters at Porcupine City, save for such laws as men made for themselves. Each man was his own lawyer, and his fists were his best defence. Secondly Wilson was a huge brute of a man, who had been known to best three or four of his fellow-creatures at a time, while Rhomer was slightly built and not more than ten stone in weight.

"You know I can't thrash you, you great hulking beast!" hissed the latter. "If there was any chance of it you're sufficient of a coward to avoid scrapping with me. I just want to tell you that you're the cruellest brute I've run up against on this range, and if I don't get my own back some day it won't be for not looking out."

Wilson's florid cheeks turned a sickly white. "Oh, my son, so you're going to stand there and call me names, are you?" he roared. "That's a dangerous kind of experiment, and I advise you to get the other side of that door, quick."

"Put him out, Wilson," cried a drunken young loafer on Rhomer's right. "Don't you have him——"

Rhomer clapped his hand over the man's mouth with considerable force, cutting short the sentence midway. Next moment the young fellow was spinning backwards in the corner of the room, where he landed in a limp heap, cursing.

Almost at the same instant Rhomer was gripped from behind while his back was turned, and ere he had time to resist he was shot headlong through the door, a multitude of stars shooting about his head. He was hurled clean across the elevated side-walk, coming to rest on his face on the hard corduroy road four feet below. He lay quite still without even groaning, while Wilson scowled at him from the steps above.

Next moment the young man whom Rhomer had thrown into the corner staggered down the steps, and dealt the unconscious man a brutal kick in the ribs.

Exactly what happened next was difficult to follow. The debauched youth was again sent spinning backwards—clean across the road this time, nor did he rise in a hurry. The fair-haired English youth was stooping over Rhomer.

"I say, get up, old fellow," muttered the former. "Everyone will think you've been kicked out for getting drunk. Up you get, and I'll see you home."

But Rhomer was unable to rise. "Go and tell my Indian to come along with the buggy," he answered. "One Tree Ranch, just over the bluff. I believe there's something broken."

The young Englishman mounted his cayuse and galloped off through the fast-deepening twilight. Five minutes later a yellow head was popped in at the doorway of Rhomer's shanty. At the bench Tango, the Indian, was repairing harness and drinking cold tea.

"I say, you Injun," said the head, "you better get along and fetch your boss. He's had a scrap with Wilson, and you'll find him outside the hotel steps."

The Indian muttered something under his breath, then, scowling savagely, he put his work aside.

"Him no good—that Wilson," he said, aloud, addressing the head. "Him curse of this city with his blind-pig joint."

There was a savage gleam in the Indian's eyes, like the gleam of smouldering muskeg which may burn for weeks ere the fire rises into the timber to set the forest in flames, as he drove over the rough timber road to fetch his master. Tango, for all his savage breeding, had some of the instincts of the gentleman, and he fully realised the brutality of Wilson's behaviour. He found his master lying at the roadside, his head on the young Englishman's knee, and as he looked, the coarse and grinning face of the saloon-owner appeared at the window above the boarded sidewalk. The Indian said nothing at all as he lifted his partner into the buggy, but his lips moved in a string of savage curses.

"You want to watch that Injun," observed the tough who shared Wilson's place at the window. "He looks like as though he wouldn't stop at giving you a bullet in the back. Anyway, he don't thank you for mauling his boss about."

Wilson laughed coarsely. "When it's time for me to get scared of an Injun I'll chuck saloon keeping and take up chicken ranching," he answered, waving a sarcastic adieu as the buggy moved slowly from the window.

"Tango ain't an ordinary Indian," observed a deep voice in the corner. "He's mixed with white men and picked up an education of a sort. But I tell you right now that them half-civilised Indians are the worst sort to get across with."

A few days later, while Rhomer lay in his bunk with a broken collar-bone, summer began in real earnest. This was the idle season at Porcupine, the chief pastime of most of the citizens being to criticise the strangers that came and went. Men sat at the edge of the sidewalks in little straggling groups, spat voluminously, and discussed the properties of each horse and rider that shuffled its way through the dusty avenues.

The Rhomer and Wilson affair was one of the chief sources of conversation, and when Tango happened to pass through the streets he was watched like a suspected criminal. The man's quick senses told him of this close scrutiny, which very soon began to affect his nerves and his temper. He became morose and nervous, and, observing this, the boys came to quite a wrong decision.

"Wilson near killed his boss, and the Indian's got it on his mind that he's going to get his own back," was the general opinion. "I guess there'll be a shine up before Tango gets out of this camp."

It was a very ordinary sequence of events—ordinary, that is, in the true nature of things—that brought about the final explosion. At dusk one evening, a ragged, wretched old brave trailed into the city on a fine white cayuse, which he tethered near to the Wilson House Hotel. For some minutes he sat on a rampike, racked with coughing, then he rose and groped his way feebly to the back door of the Wilson House, on which he knocked gently.

Wilson himself opened the door, and listened to the sick man's order for a bottle of rum.

"Rum!" repeated the proprietor. "I don't sell liquor to a crippled swipe like you. It's against the law to serve an Indian, so you better get along home."

The red man mutely held out a five-dollar bill, which, of course, was all Wilson was waiting for. Next moment the money would have changed hands, but just in the ace of time Wilson noticed a dark shadow standing by the woodpile near. His guilty conscience gave to the shadow the semblance of an officer of the law, and with one push he sent the wretched Indian sprawling across the garbage heap. Then he slammed the door.

The shadow moved forward, and lifted the consumptive Indian out of the filth. "Him carcajou, that man!" it muttered. "Him no friend to any Indian."

The sick man hissed something between his teeth, then looked up at the Good Samaritan. "That you, Tango!" he muttered in surprise

"I sick man, you bet your life. Hike out across the Great Divide blame soon. You savvee, Tango?" He patted his chest and coughed hoarsely.

"Too much hooch!" observed Tango. "What you drink it for, Kiatsee?"

Kiatsee spread out his hands in a hopeless gesture. "What else I do?" he asked. "White trader came along, take my little girl Kitchee and marry her. White trader take my boy Mucluck away east where there are many cities and many people, and Mucluck die there. Then white trader get me, you bet. Give me hooch for my pelts—hooch, hooch, more hooch! What then I do? Four—five—six nows and Kitchee come back to me, old and broken. You savvee, Tango?"

Tango nodded his head gravely. He knew from Kiatsee's fumbling speech that the old man had a bitter grievance against the white race. He took from his belt a wad of bills and handed them over to Kiatsee. Then he strode away into the darkness.

What was at the heart of Kiatsee no man can say. Well, he knew that his life was drawing to a close, but ere it slipped from him he had many wrongs to avenge—a task that to him amounted almost to a sacred duty. Very late that night he crept under the boarded floor of the Wilson House, threading his way between the heavy timber piles till he reached the centre of the building. Here he gathered together a heap of tinder-dry sticks and shavings, and calmly proceeded to make a fire within two feet from the floor. The flames took hold almost immediately, and the Indian quietly crept out at the other side of the house and mounted his cayuse. Once, twice he looked behind him, then he smiled grimly and rode on, his face towards the north.

The occupants of the hotel scarcely had time to tumble from the windows into the avenue below. With a mighty roar the flames leapt skyward, seeming at times to embrace the whole city. The sidewalks took up the flames, and in twenty minutes the whole avenue was burning. The Bank, the Recorder's office, the Wilson House Hotel fell to the ground almost simultaneously, and when morning awoke half Porcupine City was level with the ground.

Then the citizens began to make inquiries. A group of irate men bombarded Wilson's tent, but from him they could glean no suggestion as to the origin of the fire. Finally, the shrill voice of a little newsboy, who had slept under the sidewalk, broke in on the bedlam. He had seen an Indian creep under the hotel a few minutes before the fire began, and thought he was going there to sleep. That was all the boy had to say, but it was enough.

The fair-haired young puncher happened to be one of the crowd, and guessed how things would pan out. He knew what would happen to any individual on whom suspicion fell, if the angry citizens got hold of him. In two minutes he was riding like Jehu for Rhomer's ranch.

"You two better get out of this pretty quick," he advised, bursting in at the open door. "It was an Indian burnt down the Wilson House, and they'll think it was Tango ten to one."

Rhomer and the Indian were not slow in grasping the danger, and in less than no time saddle-packs were prepared and water-bags filled. "Where are we for, Tango?" shouted Rhomer, as he leapt into the saddle, conscious of the fact that he was leaving behind him all his worldly possessions.

"Land of Little Trees," answered Tango, briefly. "Keep to the trail till we're clear of the valley, then they won't be able to track us."

Next moment they were under way, the young cow-puncher waving farewell to them. But when some minutes later they left the trail behind, a cloud of dust appeared upon the skyline to their south, and they knew that the outraged citizens of Porcupine were at their heels. "Hi-o! Hi-o! Ce-la!" whispered the Indian, and he crouched low in the saddle to ease his cayuse.

II

Both men knew that in this flat and treeless country their one chance lay in outdistancing their pursuers. To the west lay the mountains, and it seemed to Rhomer that their best chance of escape was in that direction.

"Make for the hills," he shouted to the Indian. "No chance of hiding our trail here. We can make the lower range in four hours."

The Indian shook his head and pointed straight ahead across the open prairie. "Land of Little Trees," he said, meaning the great forests of stunted spruce and cedar that lay to their north. Evidently the man had something in mind—some way of evading their pursuers—and knowing that Tango was no fool, Rhomer did not interfere.

Some time later the two struck the trail of a single horseman who had ridden ahead of

them. The trail was less than ten hours old, as no wind had blown since it was made, and there was a breeze at sundown yesterday. The prints were not even drifted up where they crossed the beds of dry sand.

"Indian, I guess," pondered Rhomer. "Anyway, he's riding an unshod cayuse."

The trail followed the tortuous course of an old buffalo track, and with a cry of joy Tango proceeded to follow it. "Don't know what he's up to," thought Rhomer. "Guess he must be heading for the Indian camp at Little Tree Valley. Anyway, I'll leave it to him."

Eleven hours later two dusty and weary ponies dragged their sweating limbs out of a great ravine that ran from east to west. The foam that sprayed their bridles was touched with crimson; they were so spent that a shuffling trot was all that they could manage. Tango still led the way, his eyes upon the trail of the single horseman they had followed all day. There was fear on the Indian's face, though all expression was hidden by the thin grey dust that coated his features—that coated the gasping cayuse from head to tail, and that clung to the men's hair like hoar-frost. A dozen paces behind rode Rhomer Still. In his hand he held a heavy Webley revolver, the barrel of which was smoking.

Scarcely had the two reached the crest of the ridge when a dozen horsemen began to ford the creek far below. One of the horses fell as it reached the water and refused to rise. Then the stillness was broken by the sharp report of a Winchester rifle, and another and another. Rhomer and the Indian heard the bullets whistling over their heads in unpleasant proximity. Their pursuers began to ascend the bluff, one or two of them dismounting to ease their exhausted ponies, and kept up a running fire as they went. Rhomer turned and again emptied the chambers of the black revolver, watching the ·450 bullets plough up the sand and ricochet into distance. Next moment he and his partner had crossed the skyline and were safely out of sight once more.

As they reached the waiting Indian, Tango slipped from his cayuse and pointed with horsemen suddenly appeared, with rifles

"Tango," said Rhomer, "they're getting unpleasantly near. If they get the chance of

another volley we'll have to hold up our mitts. We just want to keep out of their range till darkness, then we're all right for a bit."

But Tango's eyes were on the trail they were following. It was clearly becoming fresher and fresher. Then the Indian made a surprising statement—surprising to Rhomer, that is. "See this trail?" he said. "The man who made it is the man who set fire to the Wilson House. If we catch him all danger is passed. You savvee?"

The country across which they were now passing was rugged and broken. Now and then great yawning crevasses barred their way, or gigantic landslips fell from their ponies' hoofs to the foot of some mighty ravine many hundreds of feet below. The Indian who had gone ahead of them knew the country well enough, for his trail led from plateau to plateau, winding its course cleverly between crevasse and pitfall. Without some such guide no man who was new to the country could have negotiated this rugged highland.

Dusk was coming on, but Rhomer and

a trembling hand down the treacherous pathway, where a bunch of unslung ready for instant use.

Tango could now hear the pounding of hoofs behind them. They knew that if their pursuers got the chance of another volley at such close range they would be compelled to surrender. They had crossed a great ravine, winding their way up a goat-track scarcely a foot in width, to the left of which was an almost perpendicular descent strewn with great boulders of rock, when Tango suddenly gave a cry of joy. Not a hundred yards ahead, at the mouth of the narrow pass, rode a single Indian on a pure white cayuse.

The Indian heard the cry, and drew rein on the slope above, awaiting them. As they reached him Tango slipped from his cayuse and pointed with a trembling hand down the treacherous pathway. A bunch of horsemen suddenly appeared, carrying their rifles unslung for instant use.

"You savvee, Kiatsee?" said Tango. "That Wilson and his crowd. They think it was I who set fire to the hotel and burnt half the city down. They finish me and my partner sure they get hold of us."

"Half the city!" repeated the old Indian, smiling complacently.

"Look here, my son," broke in Rhomer, "was it you who set fire to the Wilson House?"

"You bet your life," answered the old Indian without hesitation.

Four minutes later Wilson appeared accompanied by six or seven men—all that remained of the forty or fifty that set out from Porcupine City. He scowled savagely at Rhomer.

"Guess you ain't improved matters by firing back at us," he observed, hoarsely. "You might as well have given in this morning and saved trouble."

"That so?" sneered Rhomer. "I don't agree with you. You've been shinning up the wrong tree all day, 'cause me and Tango had nothing to do with the burning of that gin-mill of yours."

All eyes were turned at once to the old Indian whom they had overtaken. One of the men, who carried a cotton rope, rode forward, suggestively.

"Did you do it?" asked Wilson, leaning forward in his saddle like a wild beast as he stared in Kiatsee's eyes

Without hesitation the old Indian nodded his head. "I did," he answered.

For a moment the men were dumbfounded by this frank confession. They stood at the crest of the great rugged bluff, the setting sun behind them, a grim, romantic little crowd in the evening twilight.

"You purposely set fire to the Wilson House?" Wilson proceeded, incredulously

Again the Indian nodded.

"Why?" The question seemed to stab the stillness like a pistol shot. "Why did you wish to ruin me?"

A spark of life seemed suddenly to return to the faded eyes of the old Indian. He pointed an accusing finger at Wilson.

"Why," he repeated, "because it was such a one as you who took away my little girl Kitchee, and turned her out when she was old and broken. Because it was such a one as you who took away my boy Mucluck to the rotten cities of the east, where he die. Because I know you sell hooch to the Indians at five dollars a bottle—hooch, hooch, more hooch! It burn up the manhood within them till they are thin and wasted, even as I am wasted. It is a vile disease among our young men, creeping from teepee to teepee like an underground fire. Our warriors are old and spent ere thirty summers are upon them, and they drop out one by one upon the winter trail. When I, Kiatsee, know that it is such wolves as you who have brought this upon us, am I not justified in trying to rid the plains of just one wolf ere I too cross the Great Divide?"

That he should be insulted thus by an old and broken Indian, Wilson considered a slur upon his manhood. He suddenly spurred his exhausted cayuse, intending to clutch Kiatsee by the throat and wring penitence from him. Thus Wilson imagined he might uphold his dignity.

But the white cayuse which Kiatsee rode was fresh, and the Indian was on the alert. He knew these men had come to take his life, which, after all, was of no value to him now. Almost simultaneously he, too, spurred his cayuse, dragging at the right rein to avoid Wilson's savage rush.

Next moment the cayuse was clear away at a bound. The Indian leant back, dragging at the reins, but too late he saw the danger. At the crest of the bluff the solid earth seemed suddenly to slide from beneath his pony's hoofs, and man and horse disappeared from view.

There was a dull thud, and a clatter of loose stones. The clatter increased to a rumble—the deep-voiced rumble of a landslip echoing up and down the valley.

Wilson drew rein at the edge of the bluff. Fifty feet below him the whole mountain-side seemed suddenly to become alive—to slip away downwards as the white cayuse and its rider fell among the loose rocks. Boulder after boulder began to move away, slowly at first, then faster, faster, till the man and the horse were swallowed up in the moving gulf of rock and earth.

Still Wilson stared—fascinated, horrified by what he saw. The rumbling echoes filled the valley like a peal of thunder, then slowly faded away and silence came.

Wilson turned to join his comrades, but they had ridden on—not one had waited for him! Penniless, broken in health—no longer a despot among his fellow beings, he knew now that his friends of yesterday had deserted him. In the valley far below, where all was still and peaceful, old Kiatsee lay where the hand of God had buried him.

RAILWAYS IN THE AIR

The story of some marvellous engineering feats told by

HAROLD J. SHEPSTONE

A typical tower for carrying aerial cables. This one, 85ft. high, was erected in the undulations to the west of Pekin, and is used for the transport of coal.

NO branch of engineering has startled the world so much with its daring propositions and accomplishments as that of railway construction. Our steepest mountains have been scaled by the "iron horse," and there would certainly seem to be no end to the possibilities of the railway engineer when once he has made up his mind to lay his track.

During the last few years, however, an entirely new system of railway building has been put to a practical test—a system that has much to commend it, and one that opens up immense possibilities; I refer to the aerial or suspended railway. Here it should be pointed out that we have two distinct types—the older steel track, from which is suspended a train of cars, and the newer one of ropes, from which hangs a single carriage.

The former is perfectly rigid, carried as a rule on many steel girders, the aerial line upon which the suspended cars travel being as firm and as solid as those found on the ground. In the newer type, technically known as ropeways or cableways, the track consists of a steel rope, or a number of ropes, carried on specially erected towers, set a considerable distance apart. Although the steel ropes are stretched fairly tight between the towers, they, nevertheless, possess a certain amount of "slack," especially noticeable when heavy cars are negotiating them. Until recently such lines were exclusively designed for carrying freight, but with the advance of engineering science they have now been brought into vogue for passenger traffic as well. For ascending steep mountains, where the cost of building an ordinary railway is prohibitive, for crossing rivers and ravines and wild country generally, these aerial railways offer an ideal method of transport.

Of the older type, the most notable is the famous Langen Mono-Rail Suspended Railway, connecting the two mining towns of Barmen and Elberfeld, on the Wupper River, in Germany. It is the only suspended railway in existence that follows the windings of a river, passes down the streets of busy towns and along country highways, the passengers being carried along in mid-air, as it were, in long cars suspended on a marvellously constructed overhead track.

The line has a total length of some nine miles, and boasts of no fewer than eighteen intermediate stations. Six miles of its track lie over the water. The carriages are 37½ft.

long and 6½ft. wide, and hold fifty passengers. Two cars make a train. They are suspended from the rails above by bogie wheels, set 26ft. apart. Between these wheels is the electric motor, of 36 horse-power, that drives the car. During the busier part of the day the trains are run over these aerial lines every two minutes, which is proof of the efficiency of the system.

The suspended electric railway at Elberfeld, in Germany, which follows the course of a river. The cars carry electric motors that receive current from the overhead track.

At Dresden we have another example of this type of aerial railway, a little line some 1,000ft. in length, specially built to carry passengers. Like the one at Barmen, the cars run on a suspended steel track, which, of course, is perfectly rigid, the motive power being electricity. In the short space of 1,000ft. it rises no less than 80ft.

Although this type of suspended railway has been found in every way satisfactory, the engineer to-day prefers the ropeway, which is far easier to construct as well as being less costly. Then, as already explained, they can be built where it would be impossible to construct an overhead track of steel like those at Barmen and Dresden. One has just been opened in the Austrian Tyrol, while it was only the other season that the Wetterhorn, in Switzerland, was conquered by one of these aerial lines. The Tyrol line, which runs up the Kohlerer Mountain, may be said to represent the last word in aerial passenger rail-

The newly erected cableway at Spitzbergen, by which coal is conveyed from the mines to the ships.

ways, and was constructed by Messrs. Bleichert & Company. In this case the carriages are suspended from and run on a track, represented by stout steel ropes, 1⅜ins. in diameter, upon which is mounted a trolley from which hangs the car.

There are only two stations on this remarkable line, one at the foot of the mountain, and the other at the mountain summit, over 4,000ft. high. The distance between the two points, however, is 5,230ft. It is not covered in a single span, as that would have been impossible on account of the configuration of the mountain. Twelve steel towers, varying in height from 23ft. to 100ft., built at various points, carry the aerial tracks, of which there are two, for the railway is operated on what is known as the counterbalance principle — that is to say, when one car is drawn up the other descends on the opposite track, and acts as a counterbalance to the weight.

Naturally, as the line has been built to carry tourists, it is essential for it to be thoroughly safe and strong. Hence the ropes at the summit station are anchored to the mountain side in beds of concrete, while at the valley station they are connected to massive weights sunk in a deep pit. The ropes were subjected to a strain five times as great as any that could be placed upon them.

The motive power is electricity, a journey through the air in the cars occupying about fifteen minutes. The steepest gradient is 42 per cent. The cars are so suspended that whatever the angle of the ascent the floors are always horizontal, and plate-glass windows on all sides allow passengers an uninterrupted view of the surrounding country.

No engineers probably have greater obstacles to contend against than those who build these novel lines in the air. And they are busy to-day erecting these wonderful railways through space in all parts of the world. They recently built an ingenious cableway at Spitzbergen for handling coal. By means of this line coal mined 650ft. above the level of the sea is quickly transported down to the ship's holds some 5,000ft. away. Erecting the supports that carry the track proved exceedingly arduous on account of the ground being always in a more or less frozen condition.

Then in German East Africa a wonderful line was recently thrown up the Usambara Mountains for the conveyance of cedar logs down to the coast. Although designed for the primary object of carrying freight, it possesses special cars for the conveyance of workmen and the engineers. Its erection proved anything but an easy task. Although the line is only 5¼ miles long, it took three years to erect, and cost over £75,000. At one point there is a span of no less than 2,980ft., the steepest gradient on the route being some 41 per cent.

The steepest aerial railway. It has a gradient of 41 per cent., and conveys cedar logs from the Usambara Mountains in German East Africa to the railway station, a distance of five miles and a furlong.

Securing the foundations on the steep mountain-sides for the tall towers that support the aerial rails was particularly trying on account of the landslips. These latter occur after the heavy rains, and on one occasion a whole section of the line, including the towers, was swept away by falling masses of rock and earth.

A portion of the track runs through a jungle infested with lions, and these gave the engineers considerable anxiety. Time after time a transport train was thrown all sixes and sevens by these brutes. In order to receive warning of the whereabouts of the dreaded man-eaters, the engineers

profited from the cunning of the natives. A monkey will detect a prowling lion either by sight, hearing, or smell with unerring accuracy, and gives vent to agonising, ear-piercing screeches. The natives catch and train the apes to act as warders of their safety. The engineers did likewise. They bartered and bought all the tame monkeys they could find, and then placed them in advantageous elevated positions, tethering them to the branches, and fitting up a box as a residence. During the day the animals were constantly on the alert, and so perfect was the guard that very few men were lost from the depredations of the lions.

There is now in operation in the mountains, some seventy miles to the west of Pekin, a very ingenious aerial railway for the transport of coal. It traverses most difficult country, including several high peaks, with corresponding steep descents. On one section the line makes an ascent of over 1,600ft. The steel work of which the towers that support the aerial tracks are built had to be carried in sections on the back of mules up the steep mountain sides, and across streams where men and beasts were frequently up to their necks in water.

A passenger car in mid-air on the aerial railway up the Kohlerer Mountain in the Austrian Tyrol.

This particular line passes through several hamlets, and here the villagers raised strong objections. The Chinese do not allow their womenfolk to be seen in the streets, keeping them in retirement in their own houses and gardens, and they greatly feared that with the establishment of an overhead line of this description any men travelling at such an elevation would be able to overlook these sequestered spots, and in some manner or another their womenfolk would be shamed so that no man would marry them. This would be a huge misfortune to the Chinese father, who is generally rich in children. By suitable payment, however, this difficulty was surmounted. Then another came to light in the forests, where the natives adopted a very threatening attitude, and peace was restored only after lengthy conferences with the various village elders. Permission, too, had to be obtained from the members of the Chinese royal family, as a portion of the aerial track crosses several ancestral tombs of the Chinese princes. These, too, were only satisfied by payment.

Another interesting railway in the air, which was specially designed to convey passengers, is that at Hong-Kong in connection with a big sugar works. Here a

number of European workmen are employed, and in order to secure freedom from fever they are transported at the end of their day's work to a sanatorium at a high level above the sea. The carrier, or truck, that hangs over the wire cable is arranged to hold six men at a time. The speed of the ropeway is eight miles an hour, and as the men leave their work in batches, they come to the terminal and find the aerial carriage ready to take them up. All over the world these aerial lines are to be found, conveying ore, coal, and all kinds of merchandise expeditiously and cheaply. There are scores in operation where the transport works out at twopence to fourpence per ton per mile, including labour and renewals of wear and tear. How strong these steel ropes are may be gauged when it is stated that recently a mine discarded one which has been in operation for a period of five years. When first erected it had a breaking strain of 29 tons. After it had done five years service, and carried upwards of 385,000 tons of iron ore, it was still found to possess a breaking strain of 27½ tons.

The longest ropeway in existence at present is that to be found in the Andes, in Peru. It was built to carry ore from the famous Famatina copper mines, situated at an altitude approaching that of Mount Blanc. Until quite recently the ore had to be brought by pack-mules to Chilecito, a journey that occupied two and a half days, and was only feasible during six months of the year, whereas by means of the ropeway, the journey can now be made in four hours, and all the year round.

The distance between Chilecito and the mine, as the crow flies, is twenty-two miles, and the difference in elevation is 12,500ft. To overcome the heavy charge for transportation, it was decided to connect the smelting works at Chilecito and the mines by an aerial railway. Its erection was at once a bold and daring feat, and called for the services of several expert engineers, as well as 1,250 workmen, 90 donkeys, and 1,000 mules.

Before the towers for carrying the ropes could be built, a track had laboriously to be cut to the spot so that the material could be dragged there. It frequently meant considerable blasting away of the mountain-side, as well as the erection of temporary bridges over deep gullies and terrifying ravines. On account of the high winds and heavy snowdrifts on the mountains, the towers had to be built specially strong. The foundations had to be very deep and solid; while, to carry the heavy spans, the poles in some instances tower 140ft. into the air. After these had been erected and tested, the heavy ropes had to be dragged to the spot, and raised and made fast to the poles. In the higher altitudes the men experienced considerable hardships, especially through the rarefied air and the cold, icy winds. Despite all these physical and other drawbacks, however, the ropeway was built and completed in the comparatively short period of fourteen months.

As already stated, the ropeway was built to carry ore, but it is also used by the workmen, who thus save much time and discomfort. In a few hours they are raised from a point some 3,500ft. above sea-level, where the sun shines hotly, to an elevation considerably greater than that of Mount Blanc, where winter conditions prevail. To the unseasoned traveller this rapid ascent brings on mountain sickness. Nevertheless, a trip over this aerial railway is an experience never to be forgotten, as one is carried in the suspended cars up steep mountain-sides, over rivers, across wide ravines and deep gorges, up and up, until the head begins to swim in the rarefied atmosphere as the summit is reached.

Shortly, however, this remarkable line will be eclipsed in the matter of length, for the Indian Government are about to commence the building of a ropeway over the mighty Himalayas which when completed will have a length of some seventy-five miles, and cost no less than £300,000. It will connect Rawal Pindi with Srinagar, in the Vale of Kashmir. The fact is, the present carriage road into Kashmir is often blocked by landslips. The difficulties of keeping the road open may be gauged when it is stated that it costs the Kashmir Government about £100 a mile per annum for maintenance, chiefly spent in repairing slips and bridges. But the new cableway, which will possess big spans of 2,400ft. each, upheld by steel towers 100ft. high, will cross right over the mountains, and by this direct aerial route goods will be transported between Rawal Pindi and Srinagar in about fifteen hours, whereas the present time by bullock cart is fifteen days, even under the most favourable conditions of weather.

The LAST of HIS LINE

By GUNBY HADATH

Illustrated by T. M. R. Whitwell

CHAPTER XXI

THE MAN WITH THE HALF-CROWNS

WHEN the kids who were loitering near the sergeant's lodge before chapel on Friday morning saw the station fly crawl up and Penn, with a suit-case and a kit-bag, climbing into it, they ran bubbling to their fellow kids with the news that Penn had left!

For good? Well, it jolly well looked like it!

But after school it was whispered that Penn had only gone to Oxford; when the imagination of the small fry did the rest. The captain had been sent for in a frightful tear to help the skipper of Oxford choose his Eleven. Oh, no, he hadn't; it was Cambridge, after all, where they were going to make him a proctor, or something that had to do with bulldogs.

It is believed that the Persian Lambs were responsible for these reports. In any event, they sedulously spread them, plumping now for one and now for the other, as the taste of those to whom they told them prompted. Eventually, Gage declared for all the three: Penn *had* gone off to Cambridge, he *would* play for the Eleven, he *was* to be a don, and was taking his M.A. degree. No! He hadn't to pass an exam. for it, you silly goat. Cambridge was going to give it him, just as it gave degrees to Lord Kitchener and other dukes. He'd come back with a red hood and a blazer.

"But the Cambridge M.A. hood is white," protested Simpson. "I know, because my brother's got one. Besides, how can Penn play for Cambridge when he hasn't even got his colours here?"

But Gage wasn't to be caught like that. If Penn wasn't a school colour was that any reason why he shouldn't be good enough for Cambridge. Of course not!

"Of course not!" echoed Willett and the Maggot.

And he scored twenty-one against Barnsbury, didn't he?

Exit Simpson Minor, crushed; exeunt Gage and Ellis, to carry the great news on.

If their version of the story was sensational and coloured, the truth had proved almost as astonishing to the senior class-room when Pater Bovo gave it them after third lesson. So Penn was off, was he, to pit himself against the pick of the schools for the biggest open scholarship of all? And he had never said a word about it! He'd managed to keep it dark from everybody! The first Kellcaster man, at any rate, who'd gone in for a big schol. *that* fashion!

"No wonder he shut himself up so," was Musgrave's comment, as they discussed the news. "He was mugging on the Q.T. all the time. The old hound!"

"The old hound!" he repeated, proudly.

"That's the worst of those ambitious chaps," said Staples—but whether by "worst" he meant the "best" you couldn't judge. That's why he didn't buck up to get his first eleven cap. He thought he'd never do us any good at games, so he'd have a go at this old schol."

"And kept it up his sleeve—just like him!" interjected Westinghouse. "While we thought he was fed-up with being captain he was swotting on his own. If we'd known he was grinding we could have made things easier for him."

"A fat lot he'd have cared for that," laughed Staples. "It looks as if he liked them hard."

Lynge had scarcely spoken yet. Now he bustled forward.

"But what I want to know," he said, "is this: Does Penn imagine he has any chance of that schol.?"

"You'd better ask him," Musgrave smiled.

"But, honestly, does he fancy he's a chance? Against the brainiest swots from everywhere?"

Since Penn had taken nobody into his confidence, it was clear that nobody could answer Lynge's question.

"That's what *I* want to know," he kept repeating.

This irritated Musgrave.

"Well, wait till Penn comes back," he said at last. "You ask him then."

"You miss my point," Lynge argued. "If Penn had any chance of the schol. there'd be excuses for the way he's treated us. I wouldn't mind a bit if he knew all the time he was bringing kudos to Kellcaster. See?"

"Well," Musgrave answered, slowly, "I thought I knew Penn—but I didn't. If I'm beginning to know him now, I doubt if he'd go in for any schol. unless he felt a sporting chance of bagging it."

"Then all I've got to say is this: If he does win it he'll go one better than any of his brothers. *If!*"

And Lynge turned thoughtfully away. But a moment later he was back again.

"I say," he cried, "when will the result be out?"

"What result?" asked Staples, without thinking.

"The schol. result, you idiot!"

"Oh, no idea."

"Then I," Lynge answered, "am off to ask Pater Bovo."

"And I," cried Musgrave, mimicking him, and clutching at his arm, "I'm thinking, Lynge, my son, that you're more excited than anyone about it. Now aren't you? That's what *I* want to know."

At the laugh which followed Lynge took no offence.

"Why shouldn't I be?" he smiled. "By Jove! That schol. would be good biz for Kellcaster."

Penn seemed on the lips of everyone that Friday, but next morning another topic took his place, and this was the school's chance of whacking Rantham Abbey. One or two of the Eleven felt sorry for him, cabined, as they pictured, between dreary walls to the monotone of scratching quills, while they themselves were climbing joyously into the saloon reserved for them upon the 10.52. Staples, indeed, jerked his straw into the rack as the train began to move, threw his chest back, glanced at the bright sunshine, and exclaimed, dramatically, "Poor old Penn!" But Musgrave was too busy with his batting order.

If the Junior School remembered Penn it was directly after dinner, when they reminded one another that the captain was away, that his deputy had gone with the Eleven to Rantham, where most of the prefects and seniors were about to follow. If ever there was an opportunity of enjoying oneself thoroughly before call-over it was now! Or so it seemed to the juniors left behind. So, undoubtedly, it appeared to the Persian Lambs. Two outmatches running were just topping!

With the Maggot, Willett, and Simpson Minor they were discussing ways and means, when their attention was attracted by the movements of a stranger who, after coming briskly through the archway past the sergeant's lodge, was pausing in the quad as if in doubt which way to turn. They watched him stare at the clock over Big School, then try the heavy doors, and pace irresolutely towards the cloisters. Next he doffed his hat (a straw one, with a multi-coloured ribbon) and mopped his brow; then he stood stock still, and gazed around him. To the Persian Lambs this seemed the time to show themselves.

"I wonder what he wants?" Gage whispered.

"He looks jolly like a burglar," said Ellis. "I vote we have a shot at finding out."

When the stranger marked them bearing down, followed at some distance by the other three, he smiled. It was intended for a pleasant smile, and perhaps it was. But it suggested all the same that his movements had been planned to stir their curiosity.

"Good afternoon," he said, and smiled again. "Could you young men direct me to the tuckshop?"

"It's over there," Gage murmured. "Behind the swimming-bath."

"Yes; but I don't know the swimming-bath. I wish you'd show me."

"But they don't serve strangers in our tucker."

"Oh, that's all right," he answered, with a wink. "They serve a fellow's relatives, I suppose? You come with me, and we'll sham that I'm your brother. Those your pals behind you? Bring them along."

He laughed loudly, and his laugh, like his smile, was meant to be most jolly. Perhaps (one may remark again) it was. But it grated upon Gage and Ellis.

They eyed his awful ribbon and his fearful sporting suit, and made their minds up what they thought of *him!* Besides, if he didn't

know any of the fellows, what was he doing here, at any rate? And like his beastly cheek to offer them tuck! They might be peckish, but they didn't look it!

"Now come along," he said, "you two, and your three pals."

"At Kellcaster," said Gage, with a tilt of his freckled nose, "we don't have *pals!*"

"And we don't grub with strangers," Ellis added.

But the man seemed determined not to take offence.

"Well," he answered, lightly, "one lives and learns, you know. Now, look here, I'd like to ask you a few things about Kellcaster. Where can we go to have a little chat?"

"We can tell you where the Head hangs out," snapped Gage. "You go to him, you know, for jawing."

"Or to the bursar," put in Willett. "But he's playing golf."

"Of course," was the immediate reply. "But—er—well, to tell you the truth, I'm going to send my own son here——"

"I don't believe you've got a son," cried Ellis.

"Oh, don't you, kid? I tell you I mean to send my own son here, and, naturally, I'd like to know first just what you small boys think about the school. It looks a fine place—very."

"It is!" the Persian Lambs declared, emphatically.

"Well, look here. I've five new half-crowns here, just minted——"

"Then keep them, please," said Gage. "We don't know who you are, or anything about you."

But Simpson Minor gasped when Gage said this. To his economical and thrifty soul, a half-crown, old or new, was half a crown, whoever offered it.

"You chaps, it isn't right!" he cried, with his eyes upon the stranger's hand. "It isn't right to be so rude. Sir, is there anything I can tell you?"

"Ah, here's a gentleman!" the fellow laughed. "Come on, my friend. We'll have a chat together."

The Persian Lambs were about to fall upon the traitor, when they heard a step they recognised, and looked up to behold Rope.

But the five were smarting still from a further injustice inflicted on one of them that very morning by their P. and F. For Rope had sent the Maggot, after third lesson, to borrow a copy of Mr. Fellowes' *Daily World*, and when he had returned with the issue of the day before, he had been cuffed and told to get the right one. He had managed this, and Rope had seized it eagerly without a word of thanks—which, as the Maggot subsequently argued, for a fellow who'd jawed against fagging as Rope had was a bit too thick! But the Maggot had no conception of Rope's anxiety to see that paper; no idea how Rope's excitement rose while he turned to the correspondence pages, how he searched them through, then threw the paper from him with an exclamation which might have been disgust—but was not.

The five, however, were still hugging this grievance, and when they saw Rope coming they said, "Oh, blow!" They said it very loudly in order that he might overhear them, and so discover that he was in their bad books still. Rope did hear it, but he affected not to.

"Oh, blow!" said they again, and turned their backs.

Caressing his moustache, Rope asked the stranger what the trouble was. He did not add that for some minutes he had been watching them, and had heard almost all they said. He did not add—why should he?—that in his pocket he was carrying a copy of a certain weekly of the baser kind which had recently been providing its half a million readers with sensational fiction, entitled, "Are Our Public Schools a Failure?" Rope said nothing of his knowledge that this journal was sending a sly creature (whom it called "Our Special Commissioner") to poke and pry about the public schools—to gossip with servants and small kiddies, and anyone without responsibility—and much less of his own talent in putting two and two together to make four. He just fondled his moustache, scratched his long nose, and inquired, in the blandest possible manner:—

"Well, what's the matter here?"

The man with the gaudy straw and sporting suit was not quite sure whether this new comer was a master or a boy? From the way that Gage and Ellis were edging back he fancied (such was his intimate knowledge of public schools!) that Rope must be a master; from his affability and clothes he thought he was a boy. He was puzzled, and replied cautiously:—

"I've just been remarking what a fine place you've got here."

"A fine place!" Rope repeated, in a tone that seemed to challenge it. "Ah, it *looks* all right!"

When the stranger heard this he thought, no doubt, that luck had befriended him, and Rope, observing the gleam in his watery eye, felt sure that he had hooked his fish.

CHAPTER XXII

"COPY" FOR THE "MOON"

"I TAKE it, sir," the man said, and eyed Rope cautiously, "that you are one of the masters here?"

"Oh, no," said Rope, with emphasis. "I'm glad to say I'm not. I'm no slave-driver—not I! I'm one of the wretched boys."

The Persian Lambs were all agog; nothing would have persuaded them to move off now, though they could not understand at all what Rope or the odd stranger were driving at. But when from behind the sporting suit Gage caught Rope's eye, and saw its eyelid depressed once, very quickly, he understood the signal, and forgot all his animosity against the P. and F. in his eagerness to bear a hand in sport. In turn he winked to Ellis, who nudged the Maggot, who trod upon the toe of Willett, who slyly kicked the shin of Simpson Minor. All five were on the qui vive, eyeing Rope.

"No, I'm only a boy," repeated he. "But I dare say I'm as important as a master."

"Indeed!" the stranger murmured.

"Yes, I'm captain of the school, you see—unfortunately."

"Captain, are you? A misfortune to be captain! Is it not an honour?"

Rope glanced warningly upon the others.

"One might be proud," he said, "of being captain of some schools; but not of Kellcaster."

The stranger's watery eye began to gleam.

"Oh," he ventured, "oh! Could you give me a few minutes, Mister——"

"What for?" drawled Rope, parrying the effort to get his name.

"To talk about your school, sir."

Beckoning the Persian Lambs, Rope pointed to the archway outside the bursar's office.

"Just cut along," he said, "and see if my study is presentable. If it is, come and tell me, and we'll take this gentleman there."

Gage and Ellis went off gleefully, followed by the other three. It was ten to one, they knew, that the key would be in the door of the bursar's office, and a hundred to one that Rope was going to treat them to some fine sport in pulling this horrible bounder's leg! It looked like being a better rag than any they could have found. The Persian Lambs agreed they were in luck's way.

As soon as they were gone, Rope turned keenly to the stranger.

"In my study, ah," he drawled, "we can talk quite freely."

"Thanks," the man said. "Thanks. I represent the *Moon*. We've the largest circulation in the world. We're having—er—special articles, I may explain, upon the public schools."

"Indeed!" said Rope, as his hand stole into his pocket and closed upon the last copy of the *Moon*. "How very interesting! Special articles, you say? Have they been running long?"

"A few weeks," was the answer. "And I think that we should like an interview with you, sir, as captain of the school. Particularly as I rather gather from what you said that Kellcaster isn't—well, exactly what it should be. We're ready, I assure you, to ventilate any grievance." He ended with a glance of sly inquiry.

If the Persian Lambs believed they were in luck's way, "Our Special Commissioner" was sure he was. First pop he'd found the captain of the school, and obviously with a hump! Played with the craftiness on which he plumed himself, a disaffected captain was a fine fish to be landed and dished up for his readers! A spicy dish if *he* knew what was what! By Jove, yes! He had fallen on his feet!

"Come on with me," said Rope, as he saw the Persian Lambs returning. "Room ready, Philpot?"

There was no boy in the school called Philpot. Nor, as it happened, was there any boy called Barnacle, or Tacitus, or Sellyman, or Seale—but as soon as the Persian Lambs and company heard themselves addressed as such they rose adroitly to their cue. Not a doubt of it they were in for a good thing! But they were watching Rope, so they did not notice (as he did) that the journalist was scribbling their names upon his cuff. They might have exploded if they had.

How Major Powell (on the golf links seven miles away) must have groaned could he have seen Rope take possession of his office and his padded chair, seat "Our Special Commissioner" in the straight-backed one, and, bidding "Philpot," "Barnacle," and company remain, lock the door, and pop the key into his pocket. Their visitor leered when Rope did this.

"A fine study you've got here, Mr.—er——" he smiled.

"Ah, so so," Rope replied.

"Glad you've locked the door, Mister. Best to make sure we can't be disturbed. And now—er—Mister——"

"My name," Rope answered, quickly, "is Rassingham. And now, you fellows"—turning to the Lambs—"this gentleman is a well-known journalist from London, who's good enough to

be interested in the school. So I'm going to post him in a few particulars——"

"And grievances," the man insisted. "And grievances."

"And then I dare say I'll want you to give him the point of view of the Lower School. You understand—you, Philpot; and you, Barnacle?"

"Oh, yes," said Gage and Ellis, eagerly, with a sharp kick on the shins of Simpson Minor, who looked about to utter some pious protest.

The man had produced a note-book and two pencils. One of these he laid in readiness beside him, the other he moistened with his tongue.

"Mr. Rassingham," he said, "it's really most obliging of you. To tell you the truth, Mr. Rassingham, I've heard that Kellcaster is rather a retrograde establishment. Not the fault of you boys, of course not—not at all. I'm told it's a spent force, Mr. Rassingham."

"A what?" Rope queried.

"A spent force, so to speak. And, indeed, you appeared to hint as much, Mr. Rassingham, when you declared it was no honour to be captain of the school."

A queer grunt came from "Tacitus." "Sellyman" and "Seale" began to grin. The hand of "Philpot" went hastily to his mouth. And "Barnacle" blew his nose with vigour.

Before replying, Rope called them all to order with a glance.

"Ah, very retrograde," he drawled, careful, as he had been all along, to suppress his American accent. "Seven years ago, sir, when I first came to Kellcaster——"

"Phew!" gasped "Barnacle." "I mean, I beg your pardon."

"Boys were flogged, sir, and compelled to play games. They slept in dormitories, and learned nothing but classics and mathematics."

The visitor looked up from his shorthand.

"Just so," he said. "And now?" But his voice was hesitant.

"Oh, now," Rope answered, readily. "Now, sir, our educational system is modelled on the lines of the elementary schools."

"Indeed!" the journalist exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, entirely. With natural improvements. Our boys are instructed in science and all modern languages by special professors, one professor to every four——"

"To every four, you say? To every four?"

"Philpot," cried Rope. "How many of you does Professor Geruthstein instruct in modern philosophy?"

"Please, only me and Tacitus and Sellyman and Seale," Gage answered.

"And you, Barnacle! How many of you does Mr. Varga take each morning in his class for the Slav languages!"

"Just four," said Ellis, promptly.

"The Slav languages! As up to date as that?" exclaimed the journalist, and his tone was certainly disappointed. "One minute while I jot that down. Yes, yes!"

"All our teaching, sir, follows the same principle. The law classes are taken exclusively by barristers. The army class is coached by generals and colonels. The book-keeping is taught by chartered accountants from the City of London. One professor there to every three."

"I see, I see," the man assented. "But I shouldn't call that old-fashioned."

Rope sighed.

"But I'm all for the old style," he declared "I don't believe in ultra-modern methods My dear sir, that's just what I complain of. Take games——"

"Yes, games. Schools make a fetish of them."

"Not here. Our system's different, sir. Every boy can play cricket and football and so forth when he likes; but no boy is allowed to play after he is beginning to feel tired. He must rest as soon as he gets out of breath, and refresh himself with cake and milk——"

The journalist was scribbling at full speed.

"One minute!" he exclaimed. "'With cake and milk.' Yes, yes?"

"If a boy would rather not play games he may either pick the flowers in the gardens or go for a drive in one of the school motor-cars. Philpot, how many cars have we?"

"Forty or fifty, I should think," said Gage.

"Indeed!" the man ejaculated, with a queer glance. "And how about the monitor system?"

"Each boy," Rope answered, gently, "each boy, sir, is his own prefect. We find that system the only perfect one. If a boy does wrong he inflicts his own punishment, very often by going without either the *hors-d'œuvre* or the dessert at dinner. And each boy has his own bedroom and study."

"Luxurious, Mr. Rassingham."

"Well, if you like to call it so," sighed Rope. "And I dare say that you've noticed that the playing fields are rather empty this afternoon. Most of our fellows have motored over to Rantham, to help the duchess open a bazaar."

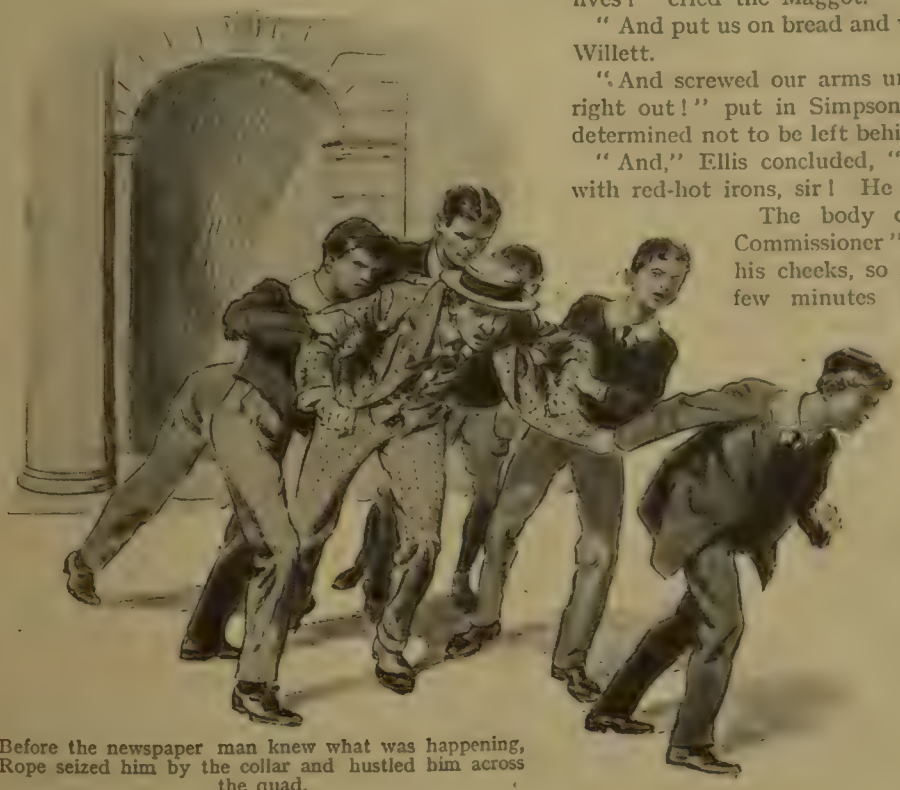
"Your head master—does he drive the boys?"

"In the motor-cars? Oh, yes," Rope answered, blandly.

"No, is he hard on them?" the man

exclaimed. "Is there nothing, Mr. Rassingham, in your very up-to-date establishment which you have to complain of?" He dropped his pencil, and jerking round in his chair gazed oilily upon the Persian Lambs. "Come now, my little men. Your captain's painted his side of the picture, but you know better than he does what goes on among you youngsters. I dare say you could tell me a thing or two."

The Persian Lambs were thinking that Rope had had his turn, and saw no reason why they shouldn't have theirs. So they tried to look as



Before the newspaper man knew what was happening, Rope seized him by the collar and hustled him across the quad.

shrinking as possible, and asked him if they might speak out?

"Of course," said Rope, with dignity.

"Yes, yes; don't be afraid!" the man encouraged.

"Well, please, sir," began Gage, "you look kind, and perhaps you could get them to alter one or two things. One Sunday I went to the head master's supper party (he always has the kids to supper every Sunday, sir) with a button off my evening gloves——"

"'Evening gloves,'" the man repeated, scribbling.

But here the pang of recollection seemed to overcome Gage.

"Barnacle, you tell him," he said, in a loud whisper.

"When he came out, the captain—— may I go on, please?"

"Oh, yes," said Rope, austerely.

"And the captain saw he'd gone without a button," Ellis continued, timidly; "he flew into an awful rage, said it was disrespectful to the Head, and hauled up all the junior school——"

"And thrashed us within an inch of our lives!" cried the Maggot.

"And put us on bread and water," exclaimed Willett.

"And screwed our arms until they dropped right out!" put in Simpson Minor, for once determined not to be left behind.

"And," Ellis concluded, "gouged our eyes with red-hot irons, sir! He did, really!"

The body of "Our Special Commissioner" was on its feet; his cheeks, so suave and oily a few minutes since, were now crimson with rage. From the five innocents, exploding in his face, he turned to Rope, who sat motionless, and eyed him with peculiar satisfaction.

"You've been playing with me!" he roared. "How dare you? Little brats!"

"Sit down!" commanded Rope.

Cramming the gaudy straw upon his head, the man strode over to the door.

"Unlock the door!" he cried. "Give me the key!"

"There's no hurry," Rope assured him, sweetly.

"We're just beginning to like you," said the Persian Lambs.

For a moment he looked as if he was about to strike them; but as the others moved nearer he thought better of it, and laughed a clumsy laugh. He decided to try other tactics.

"A very pretty joke," he laughed, returning to the table, and facing Rope. "I do admit, Mr. Rassingham, you've pulled my leg. Do you know, I almost swallowed your kid about the four professors to every boy?"

"You swallowed it entirely!" cried Gage.

"Well, perhaps I did," said he, with a guffaw. "Ha, ha! I've heartily enjoyed it." He scarcely looked as if he had, but that must pass. "And now, Mr. Rassingham, shall we talk seriously?"

"If you sit down," Rope said, "I'll begin."

"Good!" the other ejaculated, fumbling a second time for his note-book. "After pleasure, business. Eh, my little men?"

And he beamed on Gage and Ellis, to indicate how freely he forgave them. Inwardly he was longing to break their heads.

"Ready?" inquired Rope.

"Quite ready," said the journalist.

Signing to the Birds of Freedom not to interrupt, Rope began to speak incisively, slowly, with stinging bitterness.

"You," he said, leaning forward across the table till his face almost touched the other's, "you are the scum who writes scummy lies about public schools for a scummy little rag. No, sit down! Keep still! You let me finish or I'll go for you with this." He raised the major's heavy ruler savagely. "You came here to get scandal, to try and find something nasty to say about Kellcaster. You tried to bribe these kids. You thought I didn't know you, and that I'd play into your hands. Bonehead! When I've got a copy of your vile rag in my pocket!"

Most of this was Greek to the Persian Lambs, but if it puzzled them it confounded the journalist.

He made no further attempt, however, to rise. He seemed fascinated. He sat moistening his lips, and stared at Rope.

"You—a worm like you!" the passionate words rained on, "a beastly back-door scavenger—to come here to ferret round for scandal! All's fish that gets into your net. Oh, I read what you insinuated last week against Claybury, and your lies about Rettingham the week before! So I spotted you, and led you on, till you fancied that *I'd* help you to find something against Kellcaster!"

The Persian Lambs were watching in awed wonder, and now Rope paused, and seemed to catch his breath.

"In my time," he said, huskily, "I've done a thing or two I'm sorry for. But I haven't sunk quite low enough to help an outsider fling mud at Kellcaster! Or, if I have—— Oh, get out!—before I kill you!"

The passion on Rope's features (and something else more poignant and regretful, which Gage and Ellis were never to understand) brought the journalist all quivering to his feet. The colour had left his florid cheeks; he moistened his lips still, but not a word came from them.

And then Rope took a grip upon himself. He tossed the key to Gage, who caught it.

"Get out!" he said again, in steadier tones. "And I guess you won't find much to write of Kellcaster. Except how we gave you the rogue's march off the premises."

He was on "Our Special Commissioner" with a leap; in one hand he grasped the collar of that awful sporting suit, with the other its broad hem, and before the man knew what was happening Rope's knee was in his back, the Birds of Freedom had gripped him fore and aft, and he was being violently assisted across the quad. A minute later he was shot into the high road.

"Now come back, if you dare!" the Persian Lambs cried.

"And we'll show you," Rope added, queerly, "whether Kellcaster's a spent force!"

But their visitor declined the invitation, nor was it subsequently accepted by any other representative of the *Moon*. So it happened that the half-million readers of that scurrilous publication were never to gorge their appetite for scandal upon Kellcaster. For if "Our Special Commissioner" had reported faithfully——

But that night, when the Persian Lambs were talking it all over, Gage turned to Ellis suddenly, and asked a question.

"Did you twig," he asked, "how queer Rope looked when he told the beast that he hadn't sunk low enough to help *him* throw mud at Kellcaster?"

"Yes; but he didn't quite say that, Gage. He said 'if he had'—and there he stopped himself, and looked ghastly."

"As if he saw a ghost," said Gage.

"Yes, Gage. Just as if he saw a ghost."

CHAPTER XXIII

MORE ORDEALS THAN ONE

THERE is nothing really entertaining in sitting in a strange land amid strange faces for an open scholarship. Here and there you may stumble across someone who pretends to like it; you may actually discover the *rara avis* who does so—but for most

of us it is a sorry enough business. It is not unlike going to the dentist's—only worse.

We arrive upon the scene a few minutes before the time appointed; full twenty minutes early, if we are anxiously inclined. We find our rivals assembling also (cohorts, as it seems, of them), and we kick our heels and eye each other; we chat together, and do our best to look as if the business which has brought us all from east and west to this one and the same spot is the last thing we are thinking of. Of course we do.

But all the time we know that we are humbugs. How can we forget that only one of us can win, that every man in the assembly is as keen to win as we are, that we are antagonists, appraising one another's worth. But as we scan our rivals (that cocksure fellow yonder, with the grin upon his lips! the quaint man in the goggles! this dark chap, biting his nails! so many of them!) we are saying to ourselves, "That fellow looks as if he knew a jolly lot more than I do!" (And very likely he does.)

And now a clock strikes somewhere, and a door opens: the long period of waiting is over, for there appears a grave-faced don, and—"Gentlemen, will you take your places, please?" he requests.

Shuffling feet, last desperate calls on memory, an undertone, perhaps, of feeble jest, and in we go.

We find ourselves in a severe and lofty chamber, reverend very likely with stained glass, but stripped of charm for us by the sight of its long tables, and their sour burden of foolscap, quills, and blotting-paper. Here each shall find his place assigned, and the atmosphere is chastened.

It is hard now to realise that this is none other than the moment which for twelve months past we have anticipated and feared. But the don and his assistants are moving; his gown rustles as he nears us, the printed sheet falls fluttering from his fingers. Then all heads rise together while he speaks.

Yes, we will certainly write our names distinctly on the left-hand corner of each sheet. And we will *not* attempt more questions than required.

We pounce upon the paper, we search it avidly. Is there anything here we were looking up last night?

Scratch on, brave quill, till one o'clock; be very grateful, quill-driver, if you are not pulled up too often. You never expected an Unseen from Martial; and oh! the work you've wasted upon Rome's Colonies and Cleruchies! And Aristippus? The name's familiar somehow. Now, who *was* the old gentleman?

You have answered all the questions you feel sure about, and are harking back to grapple with the dubious one, when you wonder how your rivals are getting on? Glancing up, you meet the eye of the dark fellow—he is still biting his nails. But Mr. Cocksure yonder sits and frowns.

But your meditation is rudely broken. The grave voice is demanding that all papers shall be given up "in five minutes, if you please."

And so an hour's breathing space for lunch, a spare meal, eaten in despondency. Still! There's the chance of making leeway up this afternoon!

When he came out of the Senate House at five o'clock, and turned in the direction of St. Saviour's, Penn was not only feeling relieved that it was over, but also uncannily possessed. For this he had to thank his singular experience of the afternoon.

After a morning of average success, he had returned to find in the very first "Unseen" no other than that Seventh Pythian of Pindar with which he had been grappling on the night before the Barnsbury match! How it all came rushing back—"Athens, mighty city, most beautiful of proems"—and Megacles who conquered in the four-horse race (he could have hugged Megacles)—and the frown on the face of Athena in his "Gildersleeve"—and the bewilderment of Musgrave—and——

Penn dashed at it.

And another stroke of luck had followed.

Was he actually in the Senate House, or was he back at Kellcaster dreaming this exam.? If his eyes weren't playing tricks with him, the passage set for translation into Latin elegiacs was actually those very first three verses of Shelley's hymn to Apollo which Pater Bovo had set him only last week:—

> The sleepless hours, who watch me as I lie,
> Curtained with star-enwoven tapestries,
> From the broad moonlight of the sky.
> Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes.

"Busy dreams" indeed! Yes, he must be dreaming. This luck was far too good to be real!

Penn almost pinched himself. No; he wasn't back at Kellcaster, he was here—in his exam.—and there the verses were to be translated! Good biz!

> Dædala me stellis velant aulaea supinum
> Effusumque polo distinet umbra jubar.
> Stant Horae vigiles, oculos celebrantia lentos
> Alterna pellunt somnia vana manu.

Penn wrote, and smiled to himself. He was remembering how Pater Bovo had praised his rendering when he showed it up.

His good luck stuck to him till five o'clock. Brain and memory were responding as they had rarely done before, difficulties vanished on a flood of mental force. He was still smiling when he gave his papers in.

Except for the men who were staying up to take degrees, and one or two who, like Jim Penn, had a few more days to keep, the 'Varsity term was practically over, and not many undergraduates were about. So Penn was able to saunter along the K.P. without that uneasy sensation of intruding which had assailed him the last time he was here, and overcomes most strangers on their first visit.

What a glorious afternoon it was! And how, he wondered, was Kellcaster faring against Rantham? He hoped Musgrave was knocking up a century, and Lynge bowling them all out!

And then his thoughts veered to another subject, one he had resolutely thrust from him since last night. It sent him on more briskly.

As he passed into St. Saviour's he was greeted with a pleasant nod and smile from the comfortable and stately gentleman in the velvet coat, who saw a good deal of character from his little lodge, and had already made his mind up that Mr. Penn the younger would do credit to the college some day.

He sped through the deserted quad, and turned into E staircase. He banged upon his brother's door.

"Well—what happened?"

"Hallo! How have you got on?"

The two questions were uttered simultaneously; they collided, it might be said, in transit. Dennis cried one from the threshold; Jim, rushing from his bedroom, put the other.

One side of Old Penn's face was lathered, and he grasped a huge shaving-brush. But he managed to answer first.

"A 1," he said. "I'll tell you when I've shaved."

"Good! But don't be all night about it."

Dennis followed into the bedroom, and watched an operation which seemed interminable. Old Jim always growled at shaving, but, no doubt, he thoroughly enjoyed it. It was done at last, thank goodness! and Jim was back again behind a cigarette.

"Now, fire away," said Dennis.

"Old man, I couldn't shave before; I was too trembly. I'd much rather have been in your shoes when you went back after lunch. After all, you were only going to an exam. I say, how did you get on?"

"Oh, so-so; I'd a lot of luck. Go on, Jim."

"But I was going to something very much beastlier. Still, it had to be seen through. So off I tootled to the tutor's house, and nearly did a bolt upon the step. But the butler showed up in the nick of time. And there I was, old man, *planté là*—in the jolly old lion's denner, don't you know!"

"By Jove, Jim! But you're full of beans!"

"You should have seen me when I was getting it off my chest. There wasn't anything beany about me then! And the old man gave me a regular cagger; he laid it on with a trowel, by Jove! Bnt, at last, he said I'd broken gate so long ago that he supposed it came under the statute of limitations. 'But if I'd known, Mr. Penn, you would certainly have gone down for a while,' he said. 'Yes, sir,' said I, and looked an ass."

"That wasn't all!"

"You old rogue! I believe you're in the know. No; it wasn't all. For when we'd shaken hands on bygones being bygones, out he pulls a letter and reads it to me. That editor of yours is the tutor's brother!"

"So he told me."

"Then he must have told you he was going to write? You kept that dark!"

"I kept it dark last night because I wasn't certain——"

"That's you all over, Den!" Jim broke in, laughing.

"And I didn't want to say more than I knew. What was in the letter?"

"Old man, I'll spare your blushes. It was a tagger, by Jove! of wonderful exploits in Fleet Street—piled up by the editor on my behalf. 'So after that, Mr. Penn,' the tutor said, 'of course, we can't say any more about it.' 'No, sir,' said I, and looked a bigger ass."

Then they laughed together, and if they had been Frenchmen must have kissed. But, instead, Jim thumped Dennis, and assured him gravely that he was a "blighter," and Dennis returned the compliment in kind; and no one could have doubted that off two minds a load was lifted.

"And now," said Dennis, presently, "there's only Pepperdine."

"Well, I've got twenty pounds, Den!"

"But in your letter——"

Jim laughed.

"Well, that's what *I've* been keeping dark," he said. "As a matter of fact, old man, it was only repaid to me this very morning, after you'd

gone, by a Johnny here who's owed it me a year at least. I never expected to see——" He broke off abruptly, as a step was heard outside. "Den! By the same token here comes Pepperdine!"

CHAPTER XXIV

A WHOLE HOLIDAY FOR KELLCASTER

"HAIL Birds of Freedom! Hail ill-omened fowls——"

"Why ill-omened?" interrupted Gage.

"Because they are," the Maggot growled. "Dry up!"

He chewed his pen a moment, stared at the ceiling, then dashed on with the inspired verse:—

"My moulted eagles, now your course is run——"

"Eagles don't run," said Simpson Minor; "they fly."

"All *right!* I'm coming to that:—

"Your wings shall flap no more. No more your howls——"

"Eagles don't how——"

But Gage clapped his hand on Simpson's mouth. "Go on, poet!" he cried.

"Shall greet the rising of the morning sun."

"There! Now I'll read the whole verse out to you. The first verse of my Ode to the Expiring Birds of Freedom."

It was ten days after Penn's return to Kellcaster, and the Persian Lambs and company found themselves detained after third lesson with a hundred lines *per caput*. One cannot pretend that this was a unique experience for them, or, as they had the class-room to themselves, that their attention was absorbed by the hundred lines. On the contrary, it was fixed on the Maggot.

"Jolly good!" cried Gage, but he clapped both hands over the sheet. "No, don't read it out just yet. What do you mean by saying the Birds are busted?"

The Maggot's face fell, for, like all poets, he enjoyed reciting his own poetry. But he stifled his disappointment in the excitement of having news to tell, exclaiming eagerly:—

"What! Didn't Rope speak to you this morning?"

"He's hardly spoken to me for days," said Gage.

"Or to any of us. He's been quite different ever since we ragged that beast in the straw hat."

"The newspaper man, you mean?"

"Of course. Rope hasn't been the same since then."

The only head that had returned to its imposition looked up at this. It was the head of Simpson Minor, shaken piously.

"It wasn't right, you know," he murmured, "to tell that man such crams, to stuff him up so. Oh, shut up, Gage, you beast! You've gone and smudged my impot!"

A large, damp duster, descending with a heavy flop upon poor Simpson's lines, evoked this last lament.

"Rope's got the hump. That's what it is!" said Willett.

Rope's behaviour since the Saturday when the Eleven were away at Rantham had certainly been a puzzle to the Persian Lambs. He had been dull and dumpy, seeming anxious to avoid them, and as far as they could make it out (and they pondered it a lot) he looked as if he was ashamed of something. Exactly, Gage reminded Ellis, as Brown Major did that week before he was found out for pinching Parker's shilling. But Rope had never stolen anything, they were jolly sure of that. Their P. and. F. was queer, but he was straight.

"You didn't see him this morning?" repeated Moorgate. "I did!"

"Well?"

"I ran across him in the cloisters before school. He never smiled or chipped me, as he generally does, but just grunted, and told me he was going to see you too, to tell you that the Birds must be—what was his word?—disbanded."

"Why?"

"He never said. 'But I tell you what I'll do,' he said, 'on the last day of term I'll stand you all a jolly good cherry feast and yankee-pankee, as a proper farewell meeting. At least I'll do that, if I'm here,' he said."

"If he's here?"

"'If I'm here,' he said. Those were his very words, Gage."

Gage whistled. Ellis whistled. They looked at one another blankly.

"Rope was a bit down on us," they cried together, "but I don't care what anybody says—he isn't a bad sort."

"Jolly decent in lots of ways," said Willett. "Though he wouldn't let us have a whack of his study!"

"Wasn't he fine, too, when he gave that *Moon* beast toko? I say, do you think, you chaps——"

But a loud wail interrupted. They had forgotten Simpson Minor, and now they

saw him staring with white face and twitching lips.

"Rope's going to be expelled!" he wailed. "We're all going to be expelled, you fellows—I know we are!"

"What for?" laughed Gage and Ellis.

"For ragging that beast from London so! I told you we were doing wrong! We're going to be expelled! What shall I do?"

His head dropped heavily upon the desk.

The Persian Lambs jumped up, and one on either side of him they patted his heaving shoulders, restored his pen to him, and smoothed his piece of impot paper.

"Look up, old man," said Gage. "Nobody has ever said a word about that day. Nobody knows anything about it. Don't you worry, Simmy; you're all right."

"You're sure?" moaned Simpson Minor.

"As sure as sure," said Ellis. "Buck up, old man. There, finish your old impot."

"I can't," said Simpson, drearily. "I'm going to be expelled!"

"Then I must finish it for you," Gage exclaimed. And, to the astonishment of one and all, he did, while Simpson Minor gradually permitted himself to be comforted.

"But Rope is anyhow," he said, at last, "or what's he looking so miserable about? And why should he have told the Maggot *if I'm here?* Why should he? You tell me that."

But nobody was able to.

While this was happening in the class-room the station fly had lumbered up the hill, and presently the venerable Parker was making his noiseless way to the Head's study.

He found the old gentleman at the long window giving on to his terrace, whence in summer time you catch so fine a view of the town that shimmers in the haze below. He had flung the window wide, that he might inhale the fragrance of his rose bushes. He stood there thoughtfully, a buff envelope in one hand.

Parker picked his master's gown up from the carpet, hung it upon its peg behind the door, then coughed discreetly.

"Yes?" murmured Pater Bovo, without looking round.

"Sir, Mr. Penn to see you!"

"Penn? But Penn would not ask you to announce him!"

"Old Mr. Penn, sir, if you please."

The eyes of Pater Bovo twinkled, but Parker could not see this because they were fixed upon the rose-bushes.

"Ah, the boy's father, I assume," he said, sedately.

"Sir! The young gentleman what they used to call Old Penn, sir!"

"Then send him in."

"At once, sir?"

Now Parker's graven glance had not missed the buff envelope, and the tone in which he asked, "At once, sir?" implied that he knew his master had some news for him, and suggested that he might be told it first.

"Why not?" smiled Pater Bovo.

"As you please, sir." But the ancient had not budged.

"Ah," said Pater Bovo, with a twinkle, "you think, Parker, that you'd like me to show you what's in my telegram first?"

"Oh, sir!" protested Parker.

"But you do, you know. Well, read it!"

He turned and showed it to the ancient, whose lips twitched as he read the message, and nearly smiled.

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir," he said at last.

"I've shown it you, Parker, because you've got to do with it. Now, listen," and Pater Bovo added a few quiet instructions. "Presently, Parker. On the terrace, you understand?"

"Yes, sir. If you please, sir," said Parker, turning quickly.

The telegram was vanishing into his master's pocket as a broad figure in flannel suit and Crusader tie appeared.

"I hope I'm not a nuisance, sir," it said.

"Well, that depends," laughed Pater Bovo, drily. "You are if you want us to put you up again, Jim Penn. It's too near the end of term, you know."

"I'm going through to Gloucester, sir. But I thought you'd let me look you up in passing."

"Ah, yes! Well, come to the window, Penn, and smell my roses. Did you ever see a better show here?"

"They're glorious," Penn assented, but his manner was less easy as he joined the old gentleman at the window, where he stood nervously, without a word. It was left for Pater Bovo to break the silence:—

"We're sorry, all of us, Jim Penn, that you haven't managed that Cricket Blue—but next year, perhaps?"

"Yes, I've a better chance next year, sir." And, suddenly, "I've come to tell you something, sir."

"Ah, so I thought," said Pater Bovo, quietly, as his hand rested on the other's shoulder. "Jim Penn, have you heard any more from Pepperdine?"

"Not a word, sir. Dennis told you how we settled him?"

It is believed that Pater Bovo enjoyed this story.

"Ah, he gave me some idea," he answered, drily. "Tell me again."

"Why, sir, he bounced a bit at first; but when I told him he couldn't hurt us in the paper, I'd drawn his teeth. Then he said he'd go off to my tutor, and he found that I'd forestalled him there as well. So he took the twenty pounds for the lot and gave me the bill. I say, sir, it was awfully good of you to send me that twenty pounds afterwards."

Pater Bovo had been smiling, but his face grew grave and almost stern at last.

"It was Rope's money," he answered. "Jim Penn, I'm not very proud of you."

You would have thought Old Penn a boy at school again.

"I know, sir," he said, humbly, "I oughtn't to have broken my gate, and I ought to have told my tutor straight away." He dropped his head. "I'm awfully sorry, sir."

"You are?"

"Yes. Really, sir."

"Ah!" said Pater Bovo, more alertly. "Well, none of us do the right thing always, Penn. We do wrong, and pay for it. You've spoiled your cricket—that's one way you've paid. Another culprit has paid more bitterly."

"Who — Spalding, sir?"

"Yes; or Rope, as we'll still call him. He came to me on the Saturday morning your brother was sitting for his scholarship, and made a clean breast of the whole thing. He was terribly cut up. He was ashamed of himself. He's been wretched ever since."

"Did he tell you——" Jim began, and stopped.

"About his letter to the *Daily World*. Yes, that is what he came to tell me. It was the letter which made him so abjectly ashamed; he saw his deed in its real light then."

"You would be expecting," Penn said, queerly, "to see the letter in the paper, sir?"

"I was surprised to find the correspondence closed that Saturday. I was grateful. But it was not till Monday, when Dennis came back and told me, that I understood. Jim Penn, your brother's action was most arbitrary—ah, most arbitrary. It would never have had my sanction had I known. But he certainly got us out of an awkward corner!"

Penn gazed through the window to the broad terrace, where all Kellcaster seemed to have rushed, cheering themselves hoarse.

Penn looked up quickly, for he felt that the old gentleman was smiling.

"Most arbitrary!" he said again. "Do you

remember, Penn, what I told you at the beginning of last term?"

"The day you told me Dennis would be captain, sir?"

"That very day. We were—ah!—discussing this young brother of yours, and I remarked that in a position of peculiar responsibility he might have some surprises for us. If things were going against him, I said, he might take the hardest line. He took it, Penn. For the sake of you and me and the school!"

"And it came off, sir!" Jim hazarded.

"Most arbitrary!" said Pater Bovo, for the third time. "I wrote to that editor, of course, to make the *amende*. I had a charming letter in return. But, really, it's a good thing that all my boys are not Penns!"

Jim was about to agree cordially, when the door opened to admit the very person of whom they spoke. Behind him came another, and both were withdrawing when they saw the Head engaged.

"No, come in! It's only your brother, Dennis. And that you, Rope? Jim Penn, I want to make an introduction."

But for once the nervous figure at the back of Dennis was dumb. When Old Penn moved across to him, and because he could think of nothing else to say, murmured, foolishly, "I think I met you last term in the cloisters," Rope dropped his eyes, and answered something inaudible. "I'm frightfully sorry," he was trying to say.

It was a curious meeting between the two of them—the man who had made so much mischief and the man who had borne the brunt of it—embarrassing for both, and not at all dramatic. Pater Bovo was watching it with amusement. He dropped into his chair as Dennis spoke:—

"Parker said you wanted Rope and me, sir!"

"I did," smiled Pater Bovo. "When Parker told me your brother was here I bade him send you two in presently. Perhaps I wanted both you Penns to hear something else of Rope.

"It appears," he went on, slowly, "that a creature came down here from that wretched publication called the *Moon*, of which you know, Dennis."

"I do!" said Penn, with emphasis.

"You were at Cambridge, and most of the Upper School at Rantham. The creature was prying for material for one of his scandalous articles. He was received, I understand, by Maxon Rope?"

He paused, and Rope inclined his head. He was not stroking the down upon his lip. All his magnificent self-assurance had departed.

"You might not believe, it, Penn," continued Pater Bovo, drily, "but our rebel who imagined that he hated Kellcaster, who had sneered at our traditions, who had certainly given colour to the conviction that he would never lose a chance to do us harm, who had written a dangerous letter for that purpose in a fit of passion—I say, Penn, you would scarce believe that this—ah!—odious person received our enemy in a manner inhospitable but not—ah!—entirely unworthy. Indeed, he led that scurrilous scavenger to feel very sorry he had shown himself at Kellcaster."

The Penns had listened in astonishment.

"It's the first I've heard of it," said Dennis.

"Exactly. But, Penn, mark this: When our rebel gets the chance to stab us, when the weapon is actually thrust into his hands, he refuses it indignantly. It makes him so incensed that his behaviour is—ah!—violent." He paused, and looked at both with twinkling eyes. "Now, what does that suggest to you?" he asked.

"Suggest, sir?" queried Jim, as the colour mounted to Rope's face.

"Yes; what does that suggest to you?"

"That Rope's getting the idea of Kellcaster," cried Dennis.

"Ah, the idea of Kellcaster!" repeated Pater Bovo. "The *idea* of Kellcaster—yes, that expresses it well. Somehow or other we've managed to infect him, Dennis, and he feels himself a portion of a not inglorious whole."

"As I always knew he would, sir." And Rope's eyes shone at the remark. "Thanks to you, sir."

"Tut, tut!" smiled Pater Bovo. "Thanks, shall we say, to all of us; and thanks to Rope himself, for having the good stuff in him. And so I've given him his choice. He may leave this term, or stay another year. Well, Rope?"

For Rope had come forward, and, at last, was looking squarely in their faces. But he turned to Dennis as he answered.

"Penn," he said, "I've come to the conclusion that cricket's a far finer game than baseball. And I fancy that that old mill you told me of grinds decent flour after all. Penn—I say—I'm sorry for no end of things."

There was nothing sentimental in Penn's reply.

"Sorry! Why, I always knew you would be," he exclaimed. "Rope, I never thought you really were a waster. You're going to stay?"

"If I may," Rope said, quietly.

The words had scarcely left his lips when a

dull murmur crept through the open window. It grew louder and louder every instant, and sounded like the voices of a crowd. It seemed to be coming nearer.

"Sir, shall I shut the window?" inquired Penn.

But Pater Bovo had laid his head aslant, and it looked as if he were listening cunningly.

"Ah! never mind the window, Penn," he murmured. "But, bless me, boy! What an unseemly hubbub!"

When another uproarious storm of sound swept in, the old gentleman looked from Jim to Dennis; and back again with an appearance of the most innocent amazement.

"It sounds to me," Old Penn remarked, "like cheering!"

"Like cheering?" queried Pater Bovo, while he fingered stealthily something in his pocket. "Like cheering, did you say, Jim Penn? How dare they make such excruciating noises?"

"It *is* cheering!" said Old Penn, rather strangely.

"And upon my word!" Pater Bovo was going on. "If they haven't the impertinence to trespass on my terrace!"

And so it was! To the sacred territory of the broad terrace outside all Kellcaster seemed rushing, shouting itself hoarse. In the very front Penn saw the Persian Lambs. They cheered and danced as well.

He was rushing out to stop them when Pater Bovo pulled him back.

"Yes, it *is* cheering," he said, bluntly, and clapped his telegram before Penn's eyes. "But I wonder, Dennis, how they found it out, unless—who knows?—that gossip Parker told them? Yes, Dennis, this telegram's from Cambridge. There, listen to them cheering you! Good man!"

He dragged Penn to the window, where Jim assisted his brother with a fine thump on the back.

"I've won the scholarship!" gasped Dennis.

"There! Listen to their cheering!" repeated Pater Bovo. "Yes; you've won the scholarship for us. Come in!"

Somebody had tapped upon the door, and it turned out to be Musgrave. Behind him appeared Lynge and Staples. The three were visibly excited.

"Dear, dear! No peace at all!" said Pater Bovo. "Tut, tut! And what do you people want?"

"If you please, sir—to congratulate Penn."

"By all means," was the dry reply. "But I hope, Musgrave, there's nothing more you want—ah!—to beg of me?"

"To beg of you, sir?" Musgrave repeated, dully, while Old Penn vainly strove to catch his eye.

"To beg of me," insisted Pater Bovo.

"No, nothing, sir."

"Ah," sighed the old gentleman, "that's good! Do you know what I was terribly afraid of when I saw you?"

"No, sir," answered Musgrave, looking more puzzled than ever.

"I was afraid, Musgrave—I really was afraid that you were coming—ah! - to ask for a whole holiday!"

Musgrave felt an elbow in his ribs. It must have been Jim Penn's.

"If you please, sir," he exclaimed, "may the school have a whole holiday——?"

"To-morr—— I mean *what?*"

"May the school have a whole holiday to-morrow, sir?"

Drawing himself to his full height, Pater Bovo appeared outraged at the idea.

"A whole holiday to-morrow, Musgrave! Whatever put such a notion into your head?"

"Why, you did, sir," Musgrave replied, audaciously.

"Tut, tut! How very unfortunate! A whole holiday! In honour of Dennis Penn!"

"If you please, sir."

"In all my life," said Pater Bovo, severely, "I never knew a boy who took so long in asking. Musgrave, when you're captain next year you really must brisk up a bit. A whole holiday in honour of Dennis Penn? Of course, of course. I shall announce it after dinner."

He signed to them to leave him alone with Dennis, and when the five had gone, and the cheering throng had vanished from the terrace, he gazed at Penn with grave and kindly eyes.

"The last of your line," he sighed. "Dennis, we shall miss our Penns at Kellcaster."

"But we none of us grow younger," he went on presently. "Old Parker and I—our harness is rusting, perhaps. Ah, well, God bless you, Dennis!"

His hand rested on the boy's shoulder and, as their eyes met, Penn felt a queer lump in his throat. He was thinking of a day, it may be, when Kellcaster would miss more than all its captains it had ever had.

"The last of *his* line," he said, under his breath.

THE END

Models and Model Making

By HENRY GREENLY

Photo. Whyman.

FIG. 1.—A fine two inch gauge model L.B. & S.C.R. tank locomotive, "Abergavenny" class, arranged for methylated spirit firing with plain wick lamp.

WHILE the average model-maker never entirely loses interest in his hobby, the advent of the darker evenings provides greater opportunities for its pursuit. The holidays are over and it is a long spell to Christmas.

The two problems at the moment paramount in the minds of those more particularly interested in the construction of locomotives and railways are: (1) the firing of model steam locomotives; (2) a suitable and efficient automatic coupling for model railway vehicles. In both instances, the writer has of late given much time and thought to them with a view to their satisfactory solution.

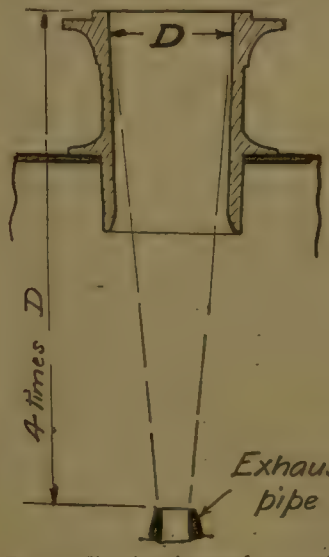


FIG. 2.—Showing the usual proportions and height of blast pipe and chimney.

The difficulties of firing a scale model engine with internal flues are many, and three methods are available: spirit, oil, and solid fuel such as coal and charcoal. The outside-fired steam-engine, such as are made commercially in large quantities, and sold at prices ranging from a few shillings in all the model shops, can be omitted from present consideration. They are hardly suitable for home manufacture, and with the methylated spirit wick-lamp or the newer vaporising lamp are quite satisfactory. The expenditure for spirit—the dearest of fuels—is not very great. But when one comes to internally fired engines, it is another tale altogether.

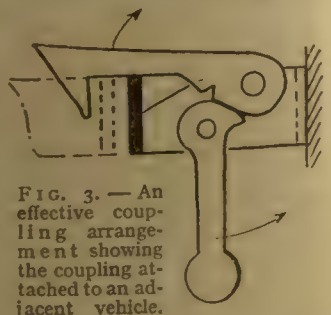


FIG. 3.—An effective coupling arrangement showing the coupling attached to an adjacent vehicle.

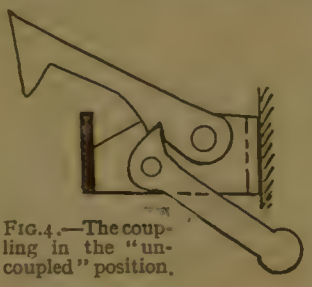


FIG. 4.—The coupling in the "uncoupled" position.

The internally-fired engine, as in the case of the real locomotive, depends for its steam entirely on the draught induced by the exhaust steam as it puffs up the chimney. If it were not for this function of the exhaust steam, no locomotive could continue to run more than a mile or so without waiting

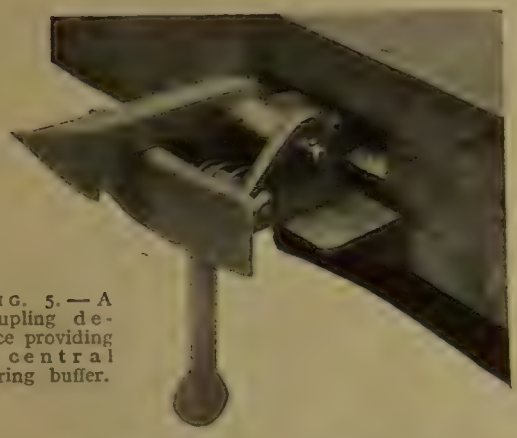


FIG. 5.—A coupling device providing a central spring buffer.

for a fresh accumulation of steam. As it is the more steam the cylinders use the better the draught and the fiercer the fire.

because of the expense of spirit firing. It is quite good in its way, but the apparatus is troublesome to work and liable at any moment to fail.

With a solid-fuel fire, quite different conditions obtain. The charcoal, or coal, lays all over the grate, therefore any air induced through it means that the fuel will be consumed with more or less intensity. All the model stoker has to watch is keeping the firebars covered. The draught can be as fierce as the engine cylinder can provide. The nozzle of the exhaust pipe should not be so small as to create an excessive back pressure in the cylinders.

To obtain the greatest efficiency the blast pipe should be low down in the smoke-box, so that the jet of steam entirely fills the chimney. Undue emphasis need hardly be made on the necessity of having the chimney and exhaust pipe truly concentric. The sketch diagram (Fig. 2) shows the usual proportions of height of blast pipe and

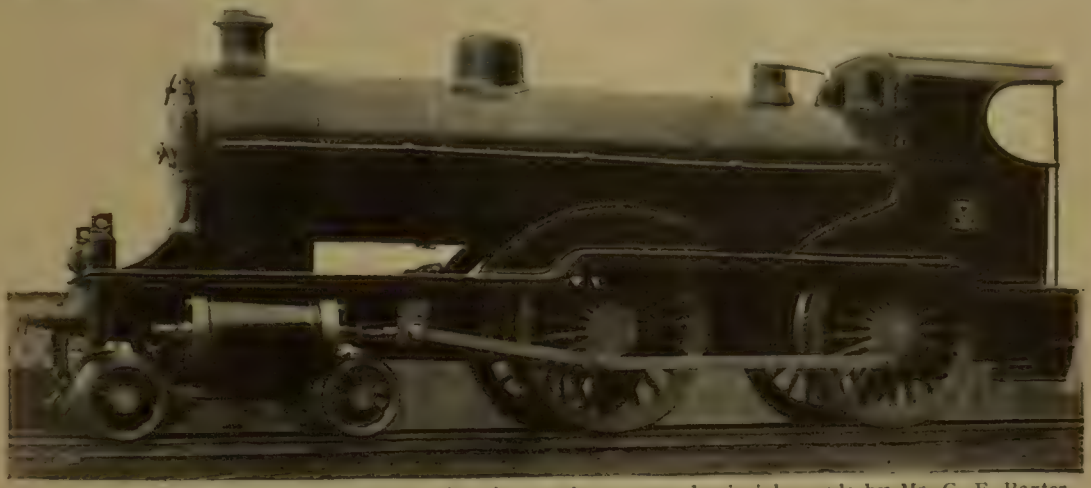


FIG. 6.—A half-inch scale model spirit-fired engine on the compound principle, made by Mr. G. E. Baxter.

In the case of a model internally-fired engine using spirits of wine (methylated spirit) this draught, while certainly increasing the heat in the fire-box, causes a waste of fuel. A large amount of vaporised spirit is ejected from the chimney unburnt. From this it will be seen the reason why the complaint is often made that "my engine uses a lot of spirit; it often costs me more than eighteenpence for an afternoon's run." In making a spirit-fired engine with an internal-flue boiler, experiment with the exhaust pipe—increasing or decreasing the height, opening or closing the orifice until the maximum efficiency is obtained. A spirit-fired engine should not have too fierce a draught, otherwise the heat-value of the flame is reduced—just sufficient air should be drawn into the firebox to thoroughly ventilate the flame.

Oil fuel, used in a wickless burner like a "Primus" stove, has been adopted by many

chimney, and from this the measurement of the internal diameter of chimney will, by multiplying

FIG. 7.—Two model wagons coupled.

the dimension by 4, settle the height of the orifice in the smoke-box from the top of the chimney.

The photograph (Fig. 6) shows a half-inch scale (2½" gauge) model spirit-fired engine on the compound principle made by Mr. G. E. Baxter, and recently rebuilt with better wheels. This engine is most efficient, and although the cylinders are very large it burns much less spirit than a model with smaller cylinders and the same type and size of boiler. The chief reason is that the exhaust is such that perfect ventilation of the fire is obtained without an excessively fierce induced draught.

Fig. 8 is a model solid-fuel burning model of

FIG. 8.—A highly successful model solid-fuel burning locomotive. This was designed by Mr. Henry Greenly and Herr Roland Martens, and is one of the most powerful half-inch scale locomotives yet made. It is seen above in the state in which it went through its first steam trials.

the same gauge which has proved entirely successful. The proportions of the exhaust pipe and funnel agree with the diagram (Fig. 2), and to ensure a lengthy period between the times of firing up and feeding the boiler with water the fire-grate is very large, extending laterally right over the frames, and the boiler barrel is no less than 3½" diameter. This model is one of the most powerful half-inch scale locomotives yet made, and was designed by the writer in conjunction with a German model-locomotive enthusiast, Herr Roland Martens. The photograph shows it in the state when it went through its first steam trials. The cylinders are the standard ones, ⅝" bore by 1" stroke; but they are fitted with steel piston rings instead of the usual packing of yarn or hemp.

Model coach building is an interesting phase of the hobby. The tools and materials required are much less expensive than in the case of engine construction. Parts, such as bogies, handles, and ventilators, can be obtained from all the model dealers for coaches in all gauges. The bogie carriage illustrated on another page was made by Mr. F. W. Chubb, and is of the G.W.R. style with "chocolate and cream" system of colouring. It is built in wood for the No. 1 (1¾" standard gauge), and is what is known as a "brake third," in that it combines ordinary third-class passenger compartments with a luggage and guard's brake van.

The difficulty of satisfactorily coupling small model railway vehicles is one that is keenly felt by all enthusiasts. The photograph represents one attempt at its solution. In designing this coupling, a device which would also provide a centre buffer was desired. As all users of model railways know, the sharp curves cause buffer-locking where ordinary side buffers are used. By adopting a centre buffer—the others can be simply ornaments—this buffer-locking can be eliminated, and the attendant derailments prevented. In the writer's coupling, a hinged hook is fitted over the top on the right hand side of the buffer which engages the buffer of the adjoining vehicle, as shown in the sketch (Fig. 3). The photograph shows two model wagons coupled up, and also exemplifies the necessity of placing the hooks out of the centre. To uncouple the hooks a hanging lever is placed underneath, which, when moved towards the vehicle, lifts the hook. If moved to the extent of its travel it engages a notch in the hook which will lock the hook in the "uncoupled" position. As shown, the coupling can be made entirely out of sheet metal. The photographs show the coupling applied to the trucks of a larger model garden railway. The arrangement is the same at each end of the vehicle, and therefore is an improvement over the ordinary loop-and-hook model coupling, in which each end of the truck has a different coupling which does not allow the engine or wagon to be turned round.

PLAINSMAN

Telling How a Famous Horse was Stolen by Bush-rangers, and the Thrilling Manner of its Recovery

By RISHTON WRIGHT

Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock

I

AT the edge of the stream, in the shadow cast by the great gum tree, he lay as still as a log. His right arm was extended to the full, and the long barrel of the revolver he held was submerged to the breech in the water.

A very faint "plup" was the only indication that he had drawn trigger, for the water had almost entirely subdued the report. He sprang to his feet with an exclamation of satisfaction, snatched up a long branch terminating in a hook, and brought to land the fine fish which had risen to the surface.

Gliding noiselessly about, he kindled a small fire and set upon it a couple of billies that were already filled with water.

"Say," he shouted, as he dropped his catch into one of the cans; "you behind the tree there! Care about a bit of breakfast with me?"

Harry Dreyton promptly stepped into the open. He was a smart, clean-limbed boy of about fifteen years of age, with a pleasant, healthy face that was still aglow from the brisk towelling which had followed the early morning dip.

"Have you eyes in the back of your head?" he asked.

"Got 'em all round, my son; and you need 'em with so many wrong 'uns about."

"What, do you take me for one of them?"

"Bless your life — no! You were only watching me because you had never seen fish shot before. It's plain to see *you're* honest!"

Harry laughed, and regarded him intently. He was a little youth, barely five feet high, extremely lean, but sinewy as a trained greyhound. His eyes, twinkling and brown, were set in a face that was tanned to the colour of coffee. At first sight there seemed to be something quaintly grotesque about him, but Harry quickly decided that it was only the high-crowned and almost rimless soft hat, worn at the back of his head, which gave him this appearance. He was prompt to notice Harry's interest.

"I apologise," he said, "for being such a little 'un. But wait until you see Norman—he is big enough. One of the very best is Norman. Ay, we are hot stuff, me an' Norman, when we get going. Come, pull yourself close in, and when he brings along the stores, we'll fall to merrily. Just see me get a move on him." He placed two fingers in his mouth and whistled shrilly.

In quick response arose a great noise of stamping feet and snapping off of branches, as though some giant were plucking up the thicket piecemeal. This grew louder and continued until a huge piebald and extremely ugly horse pounded from the trees.

"It isn't Norman after all," cried Harry. "He's sent his horse instead."

The little brown youth drew himself up straight, and dramatically extended his right arm towards the animal.

"Why," he cried, scornfully, "this *is* Norman! Cheero, old sport, the kettle's boiling."

Harry exploded into uncontrolled laughter. Living on the South Australian ranch, where his uncle reared thoroughbred horses, he picked out all the animal's points, or lack of them, in one brief scrutiny. But when their actions betrayed that something close as kinship bound this singular pair together, he felt rather ashamed of himself.

"I beg your pardon," he said, humbly. "I thought you meant a man, and couldn't know that Norman would turn out to be a horse."

"You get it over," urged the youth. "Sam Little ain't the one to spoil a joke of his own making."

From a bag that was slung over the horse's shoulders he withdrew a canister of tea, some tin plates, and a couple of small loaves. When the meal was ready he forced a share on Harry.

"Now we'll talk business," he said, seriously.

"Is this another joke?"

"I'm in dead earnest this time. Your uncle down there"—Sam jerked a nod in the direction of Summerville ranch—"wants a man, eh? A live man—one as won't stand any nonsense, and as'll get a hustle on things, eh?"

"He's rather good at that himself," laughed Harry. "But I believe he does want a stable-boy."

"Does he now," Sam murmured, doubtfully. "D'yer know, sonny, I've taken a fancy to you—love at first sight, as you might say—and for that reason I'll step over with you and take the job on."

"Isn't that for uncle to decide?"

"I'll fix him all right," said Sam, with confidence. "You leave that to me."

Accordingly, half an hour later, the lads and Norman stood before Mr. Jasper Dreyton. He was a big, ruddy man, inclined to stoutness, and just now he looked at his best, for he was still smiling from the effect the appearance of Sam Little and his strange mount had had upon him.

The "fixing" of his uncle caused Harry much amusement. Sam brought this about by the manner of his answers to the questions that were put to him—answers which left the impression that he was the one person in this world for the different duties that would be required of him—by a great deal of cool impudence, and, most of all, by the subtle hints of flattery which he here and there threw in.

"You've confidence—heaps of it," said Mr. Dreyton, drily; "and I like that in a lad. You'll do!" Then he nodded at the piebald horse. "But I can't have this old chap hanging around the place."

Sam gave a gasp of amazement.

"Why," he cried, "he'll do fine to take some of your lot along at exercise. Norman can move, and *stay*—you take my word for it—he can stay for ever. My goodness, that's a stunner!"

The horse that smartly cantered past them was certainly worthy of the spontaneous exclamation Sam had uttered. He was a great chestnut colt, clean and well defined; the muscles ran smoothly beneath his glossy coat and displayed his perfect action. It was Plainsman, the horse that was to make Mr. Dreyton famous as a breeder, and that was to develop into the crack racehorse of its day.

"Yes," said the rancher, proudly, "that horse will canter away with this year's Breeders' Cup."

"Well," said Sam, "if you want the right man in the saddle, give the mount to me."

Mr. Dreyton laughed.

"Time will show what you can do. For the present, put your old hack into box 47 until I want the room."

With a prodigious leap Sam was in the saddle.

"Cheero, old dobbin!" he cried. He leaned over on his horse's neck, and the animal, with a long, low action, galloped across the paddock at a pace which filled the watchers with amazement.

"A born horseman!" exclaimed Mr. Dreyton. "I like a bit of devilry in a man, but, if anything, he is rather too smart. Keep an eye on him, my boy. You never know, he might have a game on."

The month that ensued proved that Sam really could do all that was asked of him. For Harry's company he professed a special fondness, and in this he was encouraged by the lad, who had liked him from the morning he had first seen him by the stream.

II

"GONE!" roared Mr. Dreyton, thumping the table with a force that sent a rattle of discord through the breakfast crockery. "Gone with his living hobby-horse, and"—he seemed to be choking—"Plainsman!"

Harry started to his feet, dismayed.

"The colt stolen!" he faltered. "Not by Sam?"

"Sam!" shrieked his uncle, thumping the table again. "Ay, and if I know anything, the young rascal is none other than Jake Wincone—the coolest rogue that ever picked a stable lock. It's precious little hope I hold of seeing the colt again if he has got his hooks about him. I told you he was a wrong 'un, and I warned you straight and plain to keep your eyes wide open. This is how you let me down."

"But, uncle, you trusted him yourself; only yesterday you said that he was the smartest hand you had."

"Yesterday be hanged!" stormed Mr. Dreyton. "You've proved yourself a pretty useless kind of youngster to be about a place like this, and if the colt is not brought home

fit and well, I'll have no further need of you—yes, back to England, neck and crop, you'll go!" Off he flung, without a bite of food, and slammed the door behind him.

Harry sank listlessly into a chair, and ran his fingers through his hair, while he pondered on the duplicity of Sam.

He sprang up suddenly. He had long held an opinion of his own about this terror of the horse rearers—Jake Wincone—which he now intended to place upon its trial. His face hardened as he buckled on a cartridge-belt and an automatic pistol; then he hurried to the stables and saddled his own mare.

"Come, old girl," he cried, mounting. "There's a month's holiday for you if we pull out of this all right."

The mare strode out gamely, as though she understood quite well what the lad had said. Their destination was Morton's Ranges, some hills a good half-day's ride north of Summerville, and a labyrinth of creeks and hollows that would provide such rogues as Wincone with countless hiding-places.

It was afternoon, with a scorching sun and no breeze to stir a leaf, when he set the mare at the first long incline of the ranges. The hillside was covered with scrub in which the small gum-trees, called mallee, predominated. He was heartily thankful for the shade that these afforded, and, approaching the summit, dismounted. He had barely stretched himself upon the ground, when, on a sudden, the stifling stillness was broken by a shot. It was so near at hand that the mare plunged violently. He sprang up, and gripped the hanging rein.

"Steady!" he hissed. "There's business here, perhaps concerning us."

Three crisp reports responded to the first.

As the horseman rushed headlong into danger, the stranger felt the cold muzzle of Harry's pistol pressed against his ear. "Don't shoot!" the lad commanded.

He drew his pistol, and, dragging at the mare, tore through the trees and calf-high undergrowth. He gained the summit, flung the reins over a suitable branch, then, sidling between two shrubs, beheld a sight that astonished him, yet filled his heart with hope.

Before him the ground sloped gently into a grassy hollow. His gaze had been first arrested by a mounted man, who held his revolver at the ready; he had his back towards the lad,

and Harry, without a second's hesitation, decided that he was one of his uncle's boundary riders. His glance, flashing to the other end of the vale, fixed on another horseman. On the instant this one gripped his whole attention.

It was Sam Little, mounted on his piebald horse; and not half a dozen yards from him, secured by a long rope halter, pranced Plainsman.

Sam began to move immediately. He crouched behind his horse's head and carefully backed him behind the colt until it directly covered them from the other rider's fire. A dexterous jerk of the halter, a wild yell, and he set the young horse plunging straight at his adversary, and coolly swaying to the motion of his mount, tightly gripping the rope and his revolver, Sam came racing close behind.

With the suddenness of impulse, Sam's opponent drove his heels into his mount, and swerved in a kind of quadrant, that he might obtain an unobstructed shot at the rapidly advancing youth.

Desperately Sam strove to swing the colt round into line, and, when he found it quite beyond directing, pulled strongly on the halter.

The other, quick to take advantage of the slackened speed, jerked his horse upon its haunches, and emptied his revolver as swiftly as the chambers would come round.

Sam cried out crisply; his horse stopped dead, came down to its knees, then rolled over on its side, while Plainsman, now free and shying at the hanging rope, raced on in terror.

With an exulting cry the other horseman wheeled about, dashed full-tilt across to intercept the frantic colt, and swerving at the moment a collision seemed inevitable, caught him skilfully.

But Sam had still to be reckoned with. Resting his elbows upon Norman's outstretched form, he held his long-barrelled revolver like a gun, and pressed the trigger twice.

A spasm of pain crossed the man's face, and he collapsed in a heap on his horse's neck. But only for an instant. With a determined effort he sat erect again, and gained the cover of the trees, some twenty yards from where Harry was concealed. He was not far from the lad when he pulled up, and, stumbling to the ground, turned his attention to the hollow.

Harry now saw that he was not a Summerville boundary rider, as he had imagined, but a total stranger. And, following his glance, the lad stood dumbfounded when he saw Norman on his feet unhurt and Sam already mounted.

The stranger promptly unsheathed his knife and gave his horse a swift stab in the haunch. Emitting a whinny of pain, the startled creature tore madly through the scrub. Then he tethered Plainsman close at hand, and crouched behind a tree-trunk. He reloaded his revolver, and, holding it across his knee, awaited Sam's coming in grim deliberation.

Sam rushed headlong into danger. He was not more than twenty feet away when the stranger raised his arm to shoot. But he dropped it to his knee again before he had taken aim, and an astonished frown came to his face, for he felt the cold muzzle of Harry's pistol pressed against his ear.

"Don't shoot!" the lad commanded, in a whisper. "You've regained the horse for us; for the present let that be sufficient."

The words brought a cynical smile to the man's lips, but he kept quite still, while Sam, little thinking his enemy was so close at hand, dashed past in hot pursuit of the riderless horse.

Harry dropped his revolver, and the stranger turned a blanched face toward him.

"Young Dreyton!" he exclaimed. "Ah, you made the mistake of your life when you let that rascal get away scot-free. I've had my eye on him at Summerville this month past. I thought I'd got him fixed at last. But he always had a rogue's luck—this Jake Wincone. You'll understand what a knock-down blow it is for me now I tell you I'm Sergeant Robson—of the Mounted."

Harry felt genuine sorrow for the man. He knew that the capture of Jake Wincone would have been a fine feather in the cap of any officer.

"I'm sorry I held my gun against your head," he said.

Robson gently waved his hand, a deprecating gesture.

"As you see," he said, "I'm working *incognito*, and in such circumstances, misunderstandings will arise. We'll say no more about it." He held out his hand, and Harry grasped it warmly.

"Your shoulder is bleeding very freely," said the lad. "Let me bind it up."

Between them they contrived a rough but useful bandage, and Harry set to work upon the wound.

"Now we'll get off home," he said, as he gently tied the knot, "and have a doctor to you."

"No, no," protested Robson, hastily. "By this time Wincone will have discovered the trick I played upon him, and will be waiting, quite peac ful like, to snipe us. Come to my cabin in the hills; it is less than two hours' ride, and you can shake-down for the night."

Harry demurred.

"I've had past experience of the little terror," cried Robson. "Believe me, you won't live the hour if you set out for Summerville. Come, I regained you the colt—now see me safely home."

He continued to plead so earnestly, and seemed possessed of such a dread of Sam—or Jake—that Harry felt he must agree. So he helped the wounded man to the saddle of the mare, mounted Plainsman bare-backed, and they set off for the hills.

An hour later the lynx-eyed Sam picked up the trail.

"*Two* of 'em!" he muttered. "Well, I'll have that colt if I fight all Australia for him!"

III

Robson reclined upon a couch in the shadow of the room.

"I'd feel safer if my men would come," he said, suddenly. "You locked the colt in the stable all right?"

Harry nodded. He sat before a roughly made table upon which burned a couple of thin candles.

"I'm pretty useless," continued Robson; "and that little viper is a persevering kind of rogue. I can count on you if he comes here on the off-chance of regaining the colt?"

"Why, of course," cried Harry. He unbuttoned his holster and placed his pistol upon the table. "There, that's ready for the trouble, if it comes."

Robson raised his eyebrows.

"Ah, an automatic," he said. "A revolver is good enough for me."

"There's not much between them, anyhow."

"I'm open to conviction," said Robson, yawning. "Let's have a look at it."

Harry handed him the pistol.

"And very useful, too!" cried Robson, gaily. He held the weapon point-blank at Harry's head, and a grim menace sprang abruptly to his voice. "Just sit quite still, my little lad, or I'll drill you through and through!"

Harry gave a gasp of amazement. The malign set of Robson's face convinced him that he was trapped in the fastnesses of outlaws.

"You utter fraud!" he cried, striving to pull himself together. "So those horses in the stable and the paddock are what you've

The old horse held the bush-ranger in his teeth, and was shaking the life out of him.

stolen from the ranchers. You are just a low-down thief!"

"Stop it off at that!" snapped Robson. "And listen, my gamecock: Wincone will be in presently, so just a word of warning—keep that saucy tongue of yours stuck into your cheek, for Jake hasn't much patience even in his kindest humours."

Harry sat in silence, pondering on the fact which now stood clear before his mind: that Sam Little and Jake Wincone were *not* one and the same person. This was definitely settled when a small man impetuously burst into the dismal room. He was of about the same height as Sam, but sharp featured as a ferret, and wore the close-cropped whiskers known as bonnet-strings; with hat aslant, and tight cloth leggings to the knees, Jake Wincone looked the part of horse-thief to the finger-tips.

"Good luck!" he cried. "You've got the colt." Then he stopped suddenly against the table. "Hullo, wounded, Jim? And who is this? Why, Jasper Dreyton's kid-o—well, I'm blessed! Popped across for a bit of supper, eh? Well, well, you may be sure of a right warm welcome here, my boy." Coming round the table, he thrust his knuckles into Harry's side, and with such an evil grin upon his cunning face, that the lad felt ready to spring upon him and risk the levelled pistol.

"Give him a rest, Jake," laughed Robson. "He did me a good turn; he saw me safely home."

"Lent you a hand with the colt like?"

"I got the colt away all right," said Robson; "ay, into the ranges. And just when I was patting myself on the back, and perhaps dozing a bit, up comes a nipper of a stable-kid, on the weirdest nag you ever saw, and whips the racer from under my very nose. I was smart enough to cut them off and get hold of the colt again; but his horse was up to circus tricks, and between them they utterly deceived me; that's how I got this bullet in my shoulder."

"I'd like to meet the horse that would come it over me," sneered Jake.

"Young Dreyton got the drop of me," continued Robson. "I thought the game was up, then he let fall a word that put me right. They think at Summerville that it is the stable-kid who has gone off with the horse."

Robson laughed aloud, but Jake was in a different mood; his eyebrows came together and his face darkened.

"Now we'll let him go," he croaked; "is that it? With a map of this place and our photos in his head, like in a camera. You was a squeamish fool to bring him here, Jim. Why didn't you plug him when you had the chance? Here,"—his hand flew to his hip—"let's do it on him now."

Harry took a swift leap toward the little miscreant, then stood stock-still.

All of a sudden, as though passing from tan to flinty ground, came the hoof-thuds of several horses.

"The police!" Jake rapped out, with a dreadful imprecation, and stood commanding the door with his revolver.

"Don't shoot!" screamed Robson. "They'll swing us if you do. You've still a chance—whip off!"

Before the thief had time to move, Harry hurled himself upon him. They grappled and reeled across the floor. Furiously Jake strove to back-heel the lad. Quick as thought Harry lifted him upon one knee and flung him backwards to the table. It promptly tipped towards them and crashed them to the ground. Down flew the extinguished candles, the hot end of one striking Jake in the face. The sudden burning pain drove him to the verge of madness. With a frenzied, snake-like twist he was upon his feet, and in a trice he had gained the door.

A pale moonbeam showed Robson on the couch, his pistol hand was resting upon the floor. Harry flung out his arm and wrenched the weapon from him. As he scrambled to his feet out rang a piercing shriek of terror, and ere he reached the door it was twice repeated.

Outside the light was better. It revealed Sam Little sitting on the ground with a swelling the size of a hen's egg upon his forehead. Close beside him stood old Norman, his legs outspread, and quivering from ears to tail with fury. He held Jake Wincone in his teeth and was shaking him as a terrier does a rat.

Harry rushed forward. Sam stumbled to his feet, and patted Norman on the neck.

"Good boy," he cried. "Now drop him!"

But the horse had seen the blow from Jake's revolver butt which had knocked his master down, and for once insisted upon having his own way. The lads positively had to tear the horse-thief loose. They laid the groaning Jake upon the ground; he was too badly shaken to realise that he had met the horse that could "come it" over him.

"The police?" asked Harry, looking round and wondering at the half-dozen unsaddled horses roped together in a line.

"Here, my son," cried Sam, thumping himself upon the chest and nodding at his horse. "I watched this little cut-throat come in, peeped through the window, and saw you were fixed up pretty awkwardly. So I borrowed this parcel of horses out of the paddock, roped 'em, then came thundering up. Did I scare 'em very much?"

"Rather!" laughed Harry. Then he told him of his adventure.

"So we've got the great Jake Wincone!" cried Sam. "Perhaps it's a pity Norman didn't finish him."

When the lads assisted their prisoner into the hut, and relighted the candles, Robson was a very much astonished man.

"Cheero, my beauty!" Sam greeted him. "Thought you'd shaken us off, eh? That's not me, nor Norman either. Real hot stuff is Norman—ask Jake, he knows! Sorry I had to wing you, but they'll give you five years to get better in, and I shouldn't wonder if they don't flatter Jake with ten. Oh, it will be a merry party that sets out for Summerville at sunrise."

* * * * *

Sam was not very much out in the sentences he predicted for the men. The judge complimented him quite earnestly upon the manner in which he had brought about their capture, and Sam did not turn a hair. But when one brilliant afternoon, clad in silk of red and gold, he steered Plainsman in the race for the Breeders' Cup, and won, pulling up, by ten good lengths —well, *that* was a different matter.

THE END

THE LAST STRAW

Boatman Ben (to Harrison, in distress): "What's up, sir?"
Harrison (feeling rather heroic): "Got cut off by the tide! Had to climb up the cliffs! Taken me two hours and a half!"
Boatman Ben: "Why, I should ha' thought it'd bin quicker to come up by them steps 'long there."

With Illustrations by H. M. Brock, R.I.

I

BECAUSE Fender was a small, fishy-eyed fellow who wore spectacles and didn't play games requiring quickness of sight on account of his defective vision; because on this account he was permitted to play golf while the other fellows were compulsorily joining in cricket or football, and thus got rather "chummy" with some of the masters who could always depend on him for a "round" if everyone else failed; because his form on the golf links was more than tolerable, and fellows unpleasantly suggested, on this account, that his eyesight was very much better than he represented it to be; because he had a sarcastic, superior smile, and a way of looking at you as if he were examining you beneath a microscope; because he was brilliantly clever in ways outside actual school work, being a shining light of the debating society and a writer of quite remarkably well-reasoned essays; because he could hold his own in conversation with any beak, even the head master himself; because, on the rare occasions when he shook hands with anyone, he was found to have a cold and clammy hand-grasp; and because—following his rule of attaining proficiency in everything he took up—he swam so remarkably well as almost to make water appear his natural element; because Fender was all this, pro and con, was it quite nice of somebody to—well, let us have a full report of the outrage.

Phillips, captain of Greyhouse, being on duty, was walking up and down the avenues formed by the long tables, sending letters and papers flying in all directions. Fender heard his name called, and glanced up in time to see a packet about as big as a mustard-tin in flight towards him. Fender's defective vision was not exaggerated. Hitting a stationary ball, like a golf-ball, is very different from hitting a ball that is coming at you, like a cricket ball, or judging the flight of a football. Anyhow, this packet of the size of a mustard-tin—the large size—came whizzing through the air, and Fender muffed it badly. He grasped at it half a second too late, with the result that it lighted on his chest and fell into his porridge, making a considerable splash in doing so.

Well, a prefect distributing sixty or seventy letters can't lay each one down delicately, like a waiter serving you with a French roll. An incident like this is highly pleasing to one's fellow-lads, and a roar of laughter at Fender's expense went up. Phillips looked round, smiled calmly, said "Sorry!" and went on qualifying for the javelins, boomerangs, quoits—or whatever it is letter-throwing helps you to qualify for—in the next Olympic Games.

Fender, always neat, wiped the milk off his clothes, and then had a look at the parcel. The label bore the name of a naturalist in Lipsham with whom he had dealings—of course he was a member, and a very learned one, of the Greyhouse Field Club—and so, trying to remember whether he had ordered anything from the naturalist recently, or sent anything to be stuffed, he cut the string and took off the paper.

Fender's devotion to natural history was the one touch of nature that made him kin with a

few other fellows. Without the Field Club he would probably have been friendless, as he didn't care for the ordinary games, and never talked about them, and as the other fellows talked hardly about anything else, he was one remote from the staple topic. He didn't mind that, as he rather liked to feel that he was in a class by himself.

Knowing he could never be a Blue, or gain athletic celebrity of any kind—except possibly at water-polo—he made the most of his intellectual and scientific supremacy, and in his own little circle was regarded with some awe as a person of uncommon distinction. He took care to sit in Hall between two members of his court, and he opened the parcel because he knew its contents would interest these worthies, and possibly (he had this in his mind, too) impress some of the vulgar herd who had gained a laugh at his expense.

"Something I sent to Perkins to be stuffed, I suppose," he said rather airily to his friends, Poole and Titterton; then he cut the string, removed the lid from the oblong tin box which the paper contained, and lo! out of the box and into his porridge leapt a FROG!

The fellows at table "D" had already enjoyed a hearty laugh at Fender's expense, but it was nothing to the yell that now went up. The frog was no doubt in an exasperated condition, for its leap was a fierce one. From the porridge, after a wild glance round, it sprang on to a plate of bread and butter. A boy opposite Fender cried, "Get off there, you dirty beast!" and aimed a blow at the reptile with his spoon. The frog, agitated beyond measure, sprang off the bread and butter, hesitated, and then, steering a frenzied course, jumped once more into Fender's porridge (a second shriek going up at this), thence into Fender's lap, and so reached the floor; where a school servant pounced upon him, gathered him in a napkin, and, going into the corridor, dropped him out of a window on to a flower-bed. And so, having suffered no injury save to his nerves, the frog departed.

But he left behind him an oblong tin, paper with a label on it, string, and a message printed on a slip of paper. This floated to the ground when the frog jumped out; but Poole retrieved it.

"Here's something with it," he said to Fender, and Fender read the words:—

"WITH COMPLIMENTS
FROM THE SECRET SEVEN."

II

AFTER the departure of the frog, Fender, of course, affected to enjoy the joke as much as anybody. But inwardly he raged in a white heat. When the laughter had died down he saw one or two of the seniors looking at him with malicious enjoyment; and he knew that they recognised the appropriateness of the jest. His coldness of hand and manner, his fishy eye, his pasty complexion—he had been told of these things in the blunt schoolboy fashion that does not study feelings. Now these tellings had taken concrete form. He felt that the effect of this practical joke would be a permanent one. That loathsome creature had labelled him, if not with its personality—seeing that, for all we know, a frog may be regarded as a sport and a good fellow in his own world of pond and swamp—at any rate with its *name*.

The appellative of "Ginger," though not refined, is harmless and often affectionate; "Bandy," earned as the result of walking too soon in our unthinking babyhood, is not so nice, but can be borne; while "Beaky," though not the name one would have for choice, soon loses its offensiveness. But "Frog"! Fender's teeth came together unpleasantly the first time he was hailed by this name—after dinner that day, to be precise. "Froggie," now, would have been better than that. But "Frog"—plain "frog"—had an atrocious sound.

Strange to relate, Fender had never had a nickname before. He had never been called "Irons," or "Tongs," or even "Goggles." It has been truly said that a nickname is a sign of popularity, and his unsociability and standoffishness had rendered Fender anything but popular. On the contrary, he was cordially disliked, and "Frog" was nailed to him with a readiness that expressed anything but goodwill.

It cast a shadow upon his life. At the debates, where he held his head so high, should someone introduce the hateful word, his eloquence forsook him. He could not conceal the fact that he was galled by the name, and his enemies, noticing this, never let him off.

"Frog." He had two more years at school yet, and all that while he would have to bear this slimy and repulsive burden.

However, Fender was not the sort of fellow to take an insult of this sort lying down, and he extracted a vindictive joy from planning reprisals. He had first, of course, to find out who the Secret Seven were, and then to bring about their humiliation and downfall. Their identity discovered, he would not, he told himself, lift his little finger if by so doing he could save one

from being expelled. So fiercely burnt the white heat of his rage that he felt he would not put out a hand to save one from drowning or earthquake. The jeering laughter of that breakfast-time rang insistently in his ears; the cruel gibe had cut deep into his soul, and Fender walked about with black hatred in his heart for seven persons unknown.

After breakfast that morning he had taken the tin box, paper, and string into the study, which he shared with Poole and Titterton. Rather it should be said—in such awe was Fender held by his own little court—that he went to the study where he permitted Poole and Titterton to work and brew cocoa. Here Fender examined the box, paper, and string. His quick eye soon took in several facts. One, that the parcel had not been sent from Perkins's shop, that dealer's name and address having been cut off an old label and pasted on to another white slip of paper. Two, that whoever fastened up the box had used violet sealing-wax. Three, that in order that he should thoroughly understand from whom the present had come, the words on the piece of paper Poole had picked up had been repeated on a slip gummed to the bottom of the box.

This duplicating of the Secret Seven's compliments would appear to have been an advisable precaution, seeing that, had it not been for Poole, Fender would never have seen the loose slip.

Fender was staring hard at the labels when the door opened and the head of Greeves appeared. Greeves was the one prefect who went out with the Field Club. As he played football and cricket indifferently, he was glad of the opportunity to excuse himself from the school games as often as possible. For the rest, he was an immensely tall, shallow-built fellow, with a large head that always seemed too heavy for his thin neck to carry—seeing that it was always leaning over towards one shoulder or the other—an oval face, and a long nose somewhat resembling a parrot's beak in shape. With that simple, direct humour which is such a pronounced characteristic of our young English manhood, he was referred to as "Polly." Greeves was two years older than Fender, though had you listened to their conversation without seeing them, you would have been inclined to think that Fender was twenty years older than Greeves.

"Hallo," said the prefect, "what have the ber-hoys been doing to you?"

For the moment Fender thought it as well to descend to Greeves's slangy level.

"The ber-hoys have been sending me a beast of the field," he said, lightly, for he was determined Greeves should not suspect that he attached any significance to the nature of the beast.

"To wit, what?" asked Greeves, approaching.

"A frog," said Fender, handing the box to Greeves, and pointing to the label fixed there. "This was the receptacle, and that was the message."

Greeves poised his parrot-like visage over the box, and read the inscription on the bottom thereof.

"Some kids' cheek," he said. "Never heard of the Secret Seven before."

"Kids, you think?" said Fender.

"Yes. Don't think seniors would do this, do you?"

"Don't know," said Fender. "The term 'seniors' is a much-abused one. Compared with some of the seniors here some of the juniors are old men."

Fender always talked in deliberate, nicely shaped sentences.

"Well, I'll take these," said Greeves, picking up the box and paper.

"Do," said Fender. "I hope they'll afford you entertainment."

"Silly goat, I don't want to play with them," returned Greeves, looking more like a parrot than ever as he stood with his head on one side, the string and paper tucked under one wing—arm, that is—gazing down at Fender. "It has occurred to my inferior noddle, but not apparently to your extensive brain-pan, that these Secret Seven may be at it again soon. Some new society, it seems. So I propose to keep these articles, as they may be useful as evidence later on."

"You think they'll be sending someone else a beast of the field?"

"They'll be doing something else soon, you bet!"

"Upon which the sleuth Greeves will be on their track with thumb-marks and other things that fit and match?"

"That's the idea," said Greeves, with a grin, and hitching his head up from the shoulder where it had been resting he crossed the room in two strides and disappeared.

Beyond keeping his eyes and ears open, Fender saw no other way of obtaining a clue as to the identity of the Secret Seven. No good going to Perkins; no good going to the Lipsham post office. Even if there had been information to give he wouldn't have got it at either place.

Time went on, and no other freakish act

announced that the Secret Seven were a live force. But their present to Fender had borne fruit. He was "Frog" for all time now, and each time the obnoxious name reached his ears it seemed to fan his smouldering hate of the people responsible for it.

Could it be possible, he wondered, that the Secret Seven had been a society formed merely to play this trick, and that, the trick played, it had been at once dissolved?

It was puzzling, and Fender gave the matter much thought.

Then in a sudden flash of inspiration an idea came to him.

The Secret Seven was far too useful an organisation to go into retirement. *He* would revive it. *He* would be the Secret Seven. But, if he knew his way about a little bit, he would take jolly good care that blame for the Secret Seven's deeds was never laid at *his* door.

III

THERE was at this time some trouble about the formation of the Greyhouse Fifteen. Things had not been going very well, and several matches had recently been lost. The weak spot was the right-centre three-quarter—and a very vulnerable spot it is. Think of the stopping he has to do! If he is weak or selfish, his wing is starved. That active lad out there, waiting for passes, grows morose and stiff, and when the passes at last come he is too cold to take them.

Aubert, quite a good man on his day, strong and plucky, was this weak spot just now, thought Phillips. He agreed that he *was* a good man on his day; but, said Phillips, that day lately didn't seem to be Wednesday or Saturday. If matches had been played on Sunday, now, said Phillips sarcastically, Aubert would no doubt have won them off his own bat. But unfortunately they were played only on half-holidays, when Aubert seemed to be always off his game.

So Phillips dropped Aubert and put in Tomlin, an altogether different kind of player. Tomlin, a compact and sturdy fellow, was withal more than a little selfish. He had a delightful swerve, and, of course, people with swerves like to be always swerving; but you can't practise your swerve if you are for ever passing to your wing partner. So Tomlin had a character for being rather selfish. The match he played in was lost by more points than any Aubert had played in, and when Phillips persevered with Tomlin instead of putting Aubert back, the school got rather waxy with Phillips.

In the second match Tomlin played in the school lost by two points, and they would have won by a point if Tomlin, in the last five minutes, when threatened by the opposing full-back, had passed to his partner. But no! Tomlin here thought he would try his swerve. He had already got over the line once with the help of that swerve; and, thought he, over once again and the match is ours. But the opposing full-back, who had been studying Tomlin's swerve, swerved too, and in the same direction; with the result that Tomlin went down with a bang that made him feel glad that the next day was a day of rest. And there was his partner with an open road to the line, and no ball to take with him.

And on the following Tuesday night Tomlin's name again appeared on the games board as right-centre three-quarter for the following afternoon's match!

Now the mutterings grew into open denunciation of Phillips. He was a popular fellow, but this was going *too* far. This was rank favouritism. It was well known that Phillips and Aubert didn't get on—a strong captain can't get on with everybody—and it looked, said the murmurers, as if Phillips were determined to keep Aubert out of the team at any cost.

Fender, his idea ripening, was taking an unusual interest in this vexed question. He gathered from various sources that Phillips, by playing Tomlin so persistently, had earned the ill-will of the school. Aubert might be an uncertain horse, but on his day he was tremendous. On his day he ran strongly and tackled splendidly, and he was always mindful of his partner. It was granted he had played some poor games this season, but it was known he always took some time to settle down. The match approaching was against St. Matthew's Hospital, like all these hospital sides a big, rough side, and Aubert would have been the very man to play against them. And yet that mule Phillips——

This seemed to Fender to be his opportunity.

When the teams came down to the field nearly every man jack in the school was awaiting them. Even the Field Club had elected to watch this match instead of going out for a grub among mosses and ferns.

At length a roar from the field told Fender that the match had started.

He was sitting in his class-room—the Upper Fifth—doing some French. On the top of the lockers stood a big jar of ink. Taking this down he stole out and made his way to the corridor

in which the Sixth studies were situated. Not a sound came from one of them. Every prefect was either playing or watching.

Now was his chance. Bearing the jar of ink into Phillips's room he emptied it into his desk. He didn't flinch. There was nothing much there to hurt—only letters, lists of names, a watch (ink wouldn't hurt that), some fives balls, and a book or two. Phillips's other books were ranged neatly on his book-shelves.

Fender didn't flinch. He was determined to find out who had sent him that frog.

After he had emptied the ink in he drew a slip of paper and a gum-bottle from his pocket and gummed the slip of paper on the underside of the desk's flap. The slip of paper bore the printed words:—

"WITH COMPLIMENTS
FROM THE SECRET SEVEN."

It was the slip that had accompanied the frog. He had saved it up all this time. And you will, of course, follow his train of thought Phillips was being punished for persevering with Tomlin instead of playing Aubert.

Having done all this, he took the jar back to the Upper Fifth room, put it in its place on the top of the lockers, and returned to his seat.

He had not been in his seat a minute when he heard a footstep crunch on the gravel outside. He glanced through the window.

It was Tomlin! In his everyday attire, too. He was walking towards the field, there to be a spectator.

Fender realised what had happened. At the last minute Phillips had decided to play Aubert.

IV

FENDER will, no doubt, have been condemned as the perpetrator of a very dastardly and dirty action; but it is one of the greatest mistakes in the world to judge people too hastily. Had he been inspired by animus against Phillips, then this action of his *would* have been dastardly and dirty; but he had no feeling whatever against Phillips. He seldom exchanged a word with the school captain. Phillips's interests were almost wholly athletic; Fender's literary and scientific. It never fell to Phillips to chide Fender for slackness in the field, because Fender did not play games. And Fender's ordinary conduct was not such as to attract rebuke from the head of the school. Their paths did not cross. They were occasionally on opposite sides at the debates; but Phillips was no orator, and the few plain remarks he had to make on such subjects as "Should capital punishment be abolished?" or "That this House is in favour of extending the suffrage to women," never drew from Fender the scourging sarcasms that the utterances of some other speakers did.

Briefly, Phillips and Fender occupied different worlds, and would always do so. So when Fender emptied that jar of ink into Phillips's desk he did it with a certain compunction. In imagination he sympathised with the dismay and anger that would possess Phillips when he discovered the outrage. But at the same time he foresaw with satisfaction that Phillips's temporary discomfort would lead to the unmasking of the Secret Seven.

The present of a frog to Fender didn't matter; the school had rather enjoyed it. But filling the captain's desk with ink was a horse of a different colour; of a filthy blue-black colour; and the perpetrators of this deed must be brought to light!

The crime was obviously a political one. Tomlin had been tried, and had failed; he had been tried again and had failed. And, lo! he appears once more against the rough giants from St. Matthew's Hospital.

It is time for the Secret Seven to put its foot down. And it does so—by uncorking an ink-jar!

Such were Fender's thoughts while he carried out the outrage; and, needless to say, the sight of Tomlin, discarded at the eleventh hour in favour of Aubert, walking disconsolately down to the field to see the verdict of the school justified, gave Fender a nasty turn.

After a time Fender himself went down to the field. When inquiries were made into the outrage, it would be as well, he reflected, for it to be known that he was on the ground during the match. All eyes were turned on the arena when he reached the field, and as unobtrusively as possible he insinuated himself amongst the cheering crowd.

Greyhouse was a goal up, and the school's hopes ran high. It was a very stern, level contest, the school fighting like tigers to stop the sequence of losses. The hospital got an unconverted try, and at half-time the school led by two points only.

"Their forwards are all right," Fender heard a master say, "but their backs seem all at sea. If we had a really good dodgy three-quarter he would have been through them several times."

"Tomlin, for instance, sir?" said the senior to whom the master was talking.

"Yes, it would have been Tomlin's day, undoubtedly. Selfishness would pay to-day against that three-quarter line."

During the interval Fender saw Phillips talking earnestly to Aubert, and from remarks let drop by those about him he learned that Aubert had done anything but distinguish himself hitherto. After that Aubert played a little better, but he never did himself justice. He was one of those flowers that only flourish when the sun shines on them, and through being dropped for several matches he had lost confidence in himself. He was the weak spot in the three-quarter line, and he knew it. Once he made a desperate attempt to battle his way through single-handed, but he had not gone far when he went down with a crash beneath three of the Matt's burlies. He got a bad shaking, and during the rest of the match—save for a few brief moments—was little more than a passenger. It was evident to all, even to Fender, that Tomlin would have been far more effective. Tomlin would have left those three burlies grasping at the air.

Matt's by sheer brute force got over the Greyhouse line again, but could not convert the try; yet they held their one point lead, and the yells of all Greyhouse seemed unable to help their men to a further score.

"Another beating!" muttered the new young head-master Greyhouse had got, as he looked at his gold watch and noted that it was close on "No side." But as he consulted that aristocratic dial a shriek rent the air like a cordite shell.

The play was well in the Greyhouse half of the field when the ball came out to Aubert, who put in quite a good little run and drew the defence. At length, threatened, he passed to Phillips, who gained more ground; threatened in his turn, he feinted to pass, and ran on, leaving two burlies utterly deceived. A mud-bespattered "three" made a grab at his neck, but with a coy little swerve Phillips was away from him, and the shriek which had startled the head master became even more intense when it was seen that the Greyhouse skipper had only the full-back to beat. But it was a big "only," for this full-back was a wide-shouldered, black-haired, stocky Welshman, composed apparently of wrought iron and indiarubber, for nothing seemed to hurt

Amid a tornado of yells from the school, Phillips just managed to touch-down as Evans, unable to stop himself, turned a complete somersault.

or dismay him. With a three-quarter line at sixes and sevens he had had to avert, single-handed, many dangerous attacks. Over and over again he had picked the ball from the very toes of the forwards who had overrun the threes, and punted safely into touch. Phillips and he had tried conclusions several times, and each time the Welshman had come out on top.

His name, by the way, was Evans, and some incidents of his school days have been already related.

Phillips didn't think he would get past Evans, and Evans didn't think he would either.

Of course, there is no certainty about these things. A slip in the mud, and the best full-back in the world is beaten. Still, anybody who had watched the afternoon's play would have put their money on the hospital back.

Evans, alive to all the possibilities of the situation, wondered whether Phillips *would*—and just at that moment Phillips did. He punted the ball over the Welshman's head, and chased it for his life. Evans had a start, but he had to turn, and at the goal-line they were level, for Phillips was a quarter-miler, while Evans, though quick on his "trilbies," had never been exactly a sprinter. For a few paces they ran neck-and-neck, amid a tornado of yells from the touch-lines; then Phillips, shooting out, launched himself full length at the ball, and just managed to touch down as Evans, unable to stop himself, turned a complete somersault. From the sitting posture in which he eventually found himself he grinned through his mask of mud at Phillips, who, pumped out, lay hugging the ball to his heaving chest.

And so the tide of disaster was turned.

* * * * *

It was just like Phillips, after failing with the place-kick, to go off the field with his arm round Aubert's neck.

"It was as much your try as mine, Charles," he said. "You gave to me at the mathematically correct moment."

"Oh, rot!" said Aubert. "I played a putrid game."

"Not one of your best, but you haven't been with us for some matches," was Phillips's consoling remark.

"You were right about Tomlin," muttered Aubert.

"The side wants patching up a lot," declared Phillips. "Next match I shall drop Jackson—he was beastly selfish to-day—shove you outside and pop Tomlin back where he was before."

Aubert's grimy face lit up with new hope.

"You'll try me again?"

"Rather! I fancy you and Tomlin will make the exact combination."

And Aubert from that moment felt a different fellow.

V

"Well, I'm——"

Phillips was looking at the mess in his desk, his face full of amazement, horror, and disgust.

The Matt's men had tea'd and gone. Phillips had tea'd with them, and quite a number of complimentary remarks had been fired at him. The rough and rather surly looking Evans had proved, under the thawing influence of tea and cake, very nearly chatty. He seemed to know the game of Rugby football backwards, and gave Phillips some curt tips which the Greyhouse skipper committed to heart. Having seen the big hospital men off to town, Phillips had then proceeded with a light and cheerful step to his room to discover the compliment that had been dealt out to him.

He rushed into the next room. No one there. Into the next, to find Greeves with his long legs on the mantelpiece, and his long nose close to the enthralling pages of "Twenty Years After."

"Polly, come and look at this!" exclaimed Phillips, waiting for the parrot man.

Surprised by the agitation and wrath in Phillips's face, Greeves got his legs down and his body up by detachments, and followed.

"Look at that!"

Greeves peered at the inky confusion.

"See the label? Who are they? By Jove, I'll murder them!"

Greeves put his beak close down to the label.

"You wait here!" he exclaimed, and dashed out. Gaining his room in about six strides, he unlocked a locker in which he kept his valuables and particular private possessions, and took out an oblong tin box. Bearing this back to Phillips's room, he thrust it into the captain's hand.

"Read the label on the bottom of that," he said.

Phillips read it.

"Same label as I've got," said Phillips. "What have they been doing to *you*?"

"This is the box they sent Fender's frog in."

"Fender's frog?"

"Yes. Didn't you hear about it? He got a frog one morning at breakfast. A joke. Rather a froggy sort of chap, you know."

"Can't say I'm *en rapport* with all the practical jokes that go on," said the school captain, with a wan smile.

"Well, it came from the Secret Seven," explained Greeves, patiently. "This is the box it came in, and here is the label at the bottom—same as yours."

"Yes, I've grasped that," said Phillips. "So Fender and I are fellow-sufferers. I'm glad I'm not the only man the Seven are up against."

"Fender told me about it," went on Greeves, "so I kept the box, thinking it might come in useful if they tried their games on again. It is evidently the same people."

"But this writing doesn't tell much. It's print," said Phillips.

Greeves looked very wise.

"People don't all print alike. It'll help to have both," and with his penknife he began to strip off the slip gummed to the desk-flap.

Phillips sank into a chair.

"But what a rotten trick!"

"Leave it to me," said Greeves, his nose over Phillips's label. "I'll find out."

"Wonder who it can be!" And Phillips mentally ran over a list of fellows who for one reason or another might be ill-disposed towards him. But he couldn't fix on one who would be likely to do a thing like this.

"And why should they do it? Can't be anything to do with the footer, can it?"

"Shouldn't be surprised," said Greeves, who was comparing the two labels.

Phillips got up looking grim.

"It's a bit of a knock. I dare say I'm not too popular, but this is going *too* far. And to think seven are in it!"

"The thing is to catch Jim the Penman," said Greeves, putting the slip carefully away in his note-book. "Once you've done that the others will have to own up, unless they're vermin."

"The malefactor who committed the crime," said Phillips, pointing to a cabinet photo lying on his desk, "isn't quite as black as his deed. He spared that cousin of mine."

"It's curious how sentimental these criminals often are," remarked Greeves, as he held the photo close to his nose. "Quite nice, Phillips."

"Yes, I'm glad she wasn't injured," said Phillips. "Well, what are we to do about this? Shall I show it to the other men?"

"No, I shouldn't say anything," said Greeves. "Just lie low and wait till they do something else."

"Very well. It is in your hands, Sherlock."

* * * * *

Fender waited anxiously for news of the outrage, but none came. That evening, when he caught the name "Phillips," he lingered near the group giving it voice, but it was always about Phillips's try, never about ink in his desk.

He went to bed that night feeling very uncomfortable. Had Phillips been making stealthy inquiries as to fellows seen about the buildings after the match had started? Phillips would know it had been done during the match.

As for Greeves, he kept his own counsel. He had got to find out, first, who the Penman of the Secret Seven was. Then, from close observation of his associates, it ought not to be difficult to discover the other six.

He didn't think the Seven were among the juniors. They were biggish fellows. He was sure of that. Now, who were always in rows? Who were always just escaping being sent up to the Man, or being actually sent? Who, though lower down in the school, were older and bigger than some of the prefects, and consequently sauced the mild ones, with the occasional result that they found themselves summoned to an interview with Phillips, an interview that did not inspire them with a mad desire to leave Phillips money in their wills?

Having passed various personalities of this sort in review, Greeves sifted out the pay-dirt, and found that the gleaming little bits of gold at the bottom of the pan took the shape of Boulter and Pyke.

"B. P.," to give them the diminutive earned by their various deeds of derring do, were two large fellows in the Upper Fifth, boxers, forwards in the fifteen, slackers in form, and joint-editors of a very personal hectograph-printed little monthly periodical called *Pie*, a prominent feature of which was the "Obituary Notices" of people who had earned their dislike or for some reason or other were the reverse to popular among their schoolfellows.

Greeves, who, though a prefect, enjoyed his *Pie* as much as anybody, had kept the copies from No. 1, and while investigating the Secret Seven mystery he bethought him to consult his file of that organ, with the result that he happed on the following:—

PAUSE, STRANGER!
And view
The Last Resting-place
of
FREDERICK HILL FENDER
Naturalist.
Of ancient family,
Lofty intellect
And insuperable self-esteem,
He yet condescended one day
TO NOSE UP A DRAIN-PIPE
In hot pursuit of *reptilia*
For the School Museum.
Arrived
Twenty feet from its outflow
He could not turn,
AND SO PERISHED,
The scorn of the *reptilia*,
And a serious inconvenience
To the drain-pipe
In the discharge of its duties,
ÆTATIS SUÆ, XVI.

Cypress, sigh,
And you, yew;
Weep, sky,
Tersa of rue.
F. H. F.
Adieu!

Greeves could not help cackling over this, but his enjoyment of it did not lead him to view Boulter and Pyke with any more friendliness. They had never been polite to him, though so far they had refrained from publishing his obituary. The time might come, however; the time might come—and he opened each new number of *Pie* with a certain apprehension.

So Boulter and Pyke were evidently not too friendly to Fender. Love was not lost on either side, indeed. Soon after this obituary notice appeared, what must "B. P." do but blunder into a debate entitled, "That this House is of opinion that corporal punishment is undesirable." They went to support the motion—heartily. Boulter spoke, and was sorry for it. He forgot that there is a difference between the biting pen and the biting tongue. From Fender he got the biting tongue. So scorpion-like were the words of Fender that even the masters present could not forbear to laugh. That obituary was still rankling. Mr Boulter had come there to support the motion, but the gross ignorance of his speech, his grammar, his pronunciation of ordinary English words, all pointed to a sad deficiency of the rod in his case, and constituted a powerful argument in favour of its application.

After that, thought Greeves, wasn't it the most likely thing in the world that a fellow like Boulter would think out some way of getting even with Fender?

Greeves decided to watch "B. P." Prolific, if unbeautiful, penmen, there was plenty of their handwriting to be had, too. Sleuth-like, he began to cultivate them. They were Fifteen men, and a prefect might, without loss of dignity, hobnob with such.

He used to walk in casually and chat with them. He bought them cake and ginger-beer. He lent Pyke a Robert W. Chambers novel he had bought on his way to school. But when, chatting to "B. P." one day, he picked up a sheet of something "B." was writing, "B." objected in characteristic terms.

"You can see that when it appears in *Pie*, old chap. We like each number to be like London milk without water—a surprise." And he snatched the sheet away.

"Sorry," said Greeves.

But two days later he was bending over Pyke when this worthy was at his literary labours.

"Take your old beak away from here, Polly," said Pyke, abruptly.

"B P." consulted about this.

"What's he after?" said Boulter.

"Prying into *Pie*," said the co-editor.

"Wants to see whether we're writing an obituary about him or not."

"Good idea," laughed Pyke. "We'll write one."

And to Greeves's intense annoyance he found himself in that unsavoury gallery of the supposed dead, in these terms. As he was a prefect, it was wrapped up a bit:—

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE
of
POOR POLLY,
Who,
Abroad with the Field Club,
Got his Beak in a rabbit-trap
And, after a most painful struggle,
Coupled with screams
The echo of which
Still rings o'er mead and copse,
EXPIRED.
He leaves no widow
(That we know of)
But a very fairish debt
AT THE TUCK-SHOP.

Take warning, fellows, by the cove
Who in this grave is lying;
If you with life are still in love
Don't go a Polly-prying.

Even Phillips exploded over this. Greeves was much ruffled.

"Thanks," he said. "I was only doing a little bit of work for you."

"Then there's something behind this poetry?" asked Phillips, still convulsed.

"I just went once or twice to have a look at their writing," said Polly, in high dudgeon, "and they write this." Then, seeing that Phillips still looked amused, he added: "They'll be writing one about *you* next. You won't laugh then."

"No. And they won't," said Phillips.

* * * * *

Greeves's investigations into the handwriting of Boulter and Pyke gave him no cause to suppose that one of them was the author o the incriminating label. Anyhow, after the publication of his epitaph he looked elsewhere.

He was always peering at people's handwriting, especially the capital letters. It is rather difficult to trace printed words, but he kept at it.

Meanwhile, the football was going finely. The tide of disaster having turned, the school could do nothing wrong now. Aubert and Tomlin made a splendid wing, and the only football enthusiast in the school who could not be said to be quite happy was Jackson.

Everybody had forgotten about Fender's frog. Phillips had nearly forgotten about the ink in his desk. Not quite, though. It wasn't a compliment to be forgotten in a hurry. Greeves, however, had forgotten neither the frog nor the ink. He had ever before him that peculiar capital "S" which started the Secret and the Seven. It was a peculiar

S

like that, with a straight stroke at the top and a loop at the bottom; and one day Greeves made a discovery. He saw Aubert writing out a list in which a number of capital S's appeared. And he knew that he was acquainted with a very near relation of those S's.

So it was Aubert!

But why?

Then Greeves saw light. Aubert had been dropped from the team. Tomlin had failed, and still Aubert was kept out. The school had been annoyed about it—Aubert, no doubt, furious. Aubert plans reprisals—had planned this unspeakable act, had written the label for his secret society. The moment for the deed is fixed, the malefactor is selected by lot.

Then at the last minute Aubert is told to get into his togs and turn out for the school. But it is too late to stop the selected of the Seven from carrying out his fell purpose!

And now he, Greeves, held the Secret Seven in the hollow of his hand.

He decided to tackle Aubert.

True, Aubert was a lusty, rather short-tempered beast; but a prefect, no matter how bird-like he might be, was hedged about with a certain divinity. Greeves felt that he could safely tackle Aubert.

He therefore chose his time, and went into Aubert's room when Aubert was sitting up after his usual retiring hour, finishing some work.

Greeves had gathered from the various tales of crime and mystery he had devoured that, once you were sure of your man, the thing was to go straight for him.

Greeves went in, shut the door, put his back to it, and said:—

"That was a rotten trick of yours, Aubert."

"Eh?" said Aubert, starting a little.

"A rotten trick, Aubert." And Greeves walked forward.

"What do you mean?"

"*You* know." Greeves held out the tin-box. "You know this?"

Greeves held out the tin box. "You know this?" he asked.

"Well," said Aubert, slowly, "he's just *like* a frog. What was the harm? And what's it to do with you?"

Greeves fixed an impeaching eye on Aubert. "I'm not thinking about that."

"Then what the dickens are you thinking of?"

Greeves's face wore the smile of the

triumphant sleuth. His head once more erect on his shoulders, his beak-like nose hovered menacingly above Aubert.

"The ink in Phillips's desk."

"I put no ink in Phillips's desk."

"Think again, Aubert."

"Confound you," said Aubert, getting up abruptly, "I'll kick you out of the room in a moment."

Greeves skipped back. He was no warrior.

"Whoever sent the frog did the other thing," he said. "In each case a label was left. In each case it was the same writing."

"Got the labels with you?"

"I have."

"Let me see them."

Greeves hesitated.

"You'll understand I'm investigating this matter, and it is necessary for the evidence to remain in my possession," he said.

"My good man," said Aubert, coldly, "we're not kids, I hope."

Suitably rebuked, Greeves opened the tin box. Aubert surveyed the label.

"Yes, I wrote it. Now the other."

"This," said Greeves, "was in Phillips's desk."

"Someone soused Phillips's desk with ink?" inquired Aubert, holding out his hand.

"At the time Phillips dropped you from the team," said Greeves, taking another step back and one (involuntarily, it seemed) towards the door.

Aubert gazed hard at him. Then he drew a long breath.

"Polly," he said, slowly, "you were never nearer getting that beak of yours thumped out of all recognition. Do you suggest——"

"A label in your handwriting was stuck to the desk," said Greeves. He was flushing, for he was sensitive about his appearance. "And you can keep any personal remarks you have to make about me until you appear before the prefects."

With this he strode to the door, but the first fifteen three-quarter had nailed him before he reached it.

"Come back, you fool! Let's see that label."

Greeves withdrew his arm from Aubert's clutch.

"I'd prefer to do that in Phillips's study, Aubert."

But Aubert had his back to the door.

"Look here, Polly, I believe you've come here with the best intentions. I'll play square with you. Let me see the label."

Polly's head went down on his left shoulder, and he looked keenly at Aubert.

"I will—but on one condition. It isn't known that Phillips was ragged. You are mum?"

"As the sphinx. Let's see it."

Aubert merely glanced at the writing on the label.

"Yes, I wrote that, but I don't know a thing about the ink."

"You sent the frog?"

"I did."

"And you know nothing whatever about the ink?"

"Not a thing."

Greeves saw it was square. But he had, of course, been keeping a leading question up his sleeve all this time.

"Aubert," he said, "you've perhaps heard of a play called *Jim the Penman*?"

"Sort of know the name," said Aubert.

"Well, Jim was the penman of a gang of criminals. He forged the cheques; that was his job. The others did the rest. The others did the rest, Aubert!"

"I see what you mean, Polly. Well, say I'm the penman of this gang. I can assure you the 'rest' don't know a thing about the ink."

"Your honour on it?"

"Honour bright. One afternoon, for a lark, a few of us sent Fender a frog from Lipsham in one of old What's-his-Name's boxes. The Secret Seven began and ended that afternoon."

"Then who in thunder filled Phillips's desk with ink?"

Aubert shook his head sleepily. "Ask me another."

VI

BAFFLED and disheartened, Greeves decided to relinquish the hunt. His exertions had earned him an offensive obituary in *Pie*, and had he not been a prefect he would most certainly have been kicked out of Aubert's study for even suggesting that its occupant might be the author of the ink outrage.

Greeves therefore cooled down and out of the chase, and the term ended without further visitation from the Secret Seven.

Easter passed, and once again summer came creeping across the Greyhouse meads, mending the places worn in their green carpets, and perfuming the air with her sweet breath. Surely it is an ungracious act to make this a season of stiff examinations, for the windows are closed all too long against the sharp bite of winter, and man should revel in summer's

smiles while he may. This, at any rate, was what seemed to have occurred to Fender, for he came back to Greyhouse after Easter with a big story of "specialising" in Eastern languages as an uncle of his, engaged in business—a very lucrative one, by all accounts, in Tokio, or Hong Kong, or some such place—had offered to "take him on" and teach him the ropes, with the idea of his ultimate succession to the business and all the dollars attached thereto.

"My idea," explained Fender to the Upper Fifth, "is to make money while I'm young——"

"*Are* you young?" interrupted Aubert. "I have never thought of you as young."

Fender cast a nasty glinty look at him and continued:—

"And then I shall start life. A man is useless without money nowadays. It bosses everything. I don't intend to broil out there all my days. I shall shunt the old man pretty quick, double the profits of the concern, and then, when it is going swimmingly, sell it to a limited liability company and come home."

"You will then show the Prime Minister how to wangle the Empire?" suggested Pyke.

"I shall go into Parliament," allowed Fender, "and I have no doubt I shall tell the Prime Minister a thing or two. I shall, for one thing, have special knowledge about the East. That is always a good handle to work. I shall be looked to in debates for special knowledge on the East, and so one day one may hope for a seat in the Cabinet—and other things."

"Such as a peerage?" put in Boulter.

"That is within the bounds of possibility," replied Fender. "Meanwhile, you fellows," he added a little disparagingly, "will be kow-towing to the old idiots at the War Office, or waiting for briefs in the Temple, or rusting in country vicarages, or even," as his eye rested on Boulter, "doing a bit of clerking. But very few of you will have any money, and so you won't have any power."

And with that he walked away, his future programme mapped out to the last inch.

The head master having, apparently, received advices from Fender's home, Fender proceeded to study Eastern languages and enjoy himself. Of course, he did a certain amount of the ordinary work, but in view of the Eastern languages it was understood that he would not participate in the term-end examinations. And so, in one way and another, he got in quite a lot of golf while the other fellows were stewing in hot class-rooms. Always ready to expatiate on his future life, he told the "Upper F.'s" that his commencing salary would be four or five hundred a year—"nothing out there, you know"—and that he would have seven or eight servants at his beck and call. But in spite of this tall talk he occasionally condescended to borrow five shillings from Aubert, Boulter, or Pyke, as his father, a hard-working London doctor, did not believe in giving his bright lad too much pocket-money.

In due course arrived July and examination time. During the examinations Fender did not even pretend to do any work, and the sight of him marching off to the links with his clubs after breakfast filled Boulter and Pyke—unwilling scholars always—with gnawing envy.

Now, although Greeves had dismissed the Secret Seven matter from his mind, the frog insult was still rankling in Fender's. For Fender was not one to forgive and forget. It seemed that he would leave Greyhouse without ever discovering the identity of the Seven. For Greeves, having sworn Aubert to secrecy about the inky outrage on Phillips, had felt that it was likewise incumbent upon himself to keep silent with regard to Aubert's connection with the frog episode. He had therefore breathed no word to Fender about it.

Such tactics, however, did not commend themselves to Frederick Hill Fender. He had expected that the ink outrage would raise a hubbub which would have the effect of unmasking the Secret Seven. But nothing was said about it, and, of course, he did not dare to make any inquiry. During his idle term he had pondered deeply over the matter.

Greeves would be sure to know about it—yet Greeves made no sign that he did. Nor had Greeves said anything further to him about the frog, though he had so carefully kept the box with label attached.

Fender, therefore, decided that Greeves must be stirred to action—must be set once more upon the track of the Secret Seven.

Thinking upon this thing one day while browsing over some back numbers of *Pie*, Fender came upon the Greeves obituary, which gave him a bright idea which he proceeded to carry into effect. Greeves must be stirred to further action; and thus it came about that, opening his desk one evening after tea, Greeves shrank back with a cry of disgust, for, sprawling across his books and papers, he beheld a dead rabbit. And upon the body lay a label containing the printed words:—

"WITH COMPLIMENTS FROM THE SECRET SEVEN."

VII

RECOVERING himself quickly, Greeves's first act was to examine the label. He still had the other two, and, comparing them with this, he saw that the printing differed materially from Aubert's. Instead of Aubert's swan-like "S," this label began with an

like that.

"Righto!" said Greeves. "I'll be after you. Doesn't know I know who wrote the others, *I* bet!" and he tucked the label away in his pocket-book.

Now for the rabbit. Hearing a footstep in the corridor, he closed his desk. This gift must not be made common knowledge. For Greeves quickly saw that it had been inspired by the obituary detailing his sad demise *via* a rabbit-trap.

He must get rid of it. So, under cover of the gathering dusk and a newspaper, he presently conveyed it down to the lodge by the entrance gates, and handed it to Straker, keeper of the same.

"Rabbit for you, Straker."

"Thankee, sir," said Straker, without question. He had seen Mr. Greeves marching out with the Field Club, and knew him to be a gent fond of nosing about the country. Probably he had found the rabbit in a trap; possibly he had set the trap himself. It was no business of *his*.

For two days Greeves had no occasion for going out by the front gates. When he next passed that way he saw Straker sitting at his lodge doorway, spectacles on nose, reading the paper. A keen student of politics, and a great "argifyer," Straker had plenty of time to get up his subject. He could defeat any man at the "Rose and Crown" down in the village in an argument.

"Bunny boil well, Straker?" inquired Greeves, lightly.

"The bunny, sir," said Straker, looking at Greeves over his spectacles, "did *not* boil well."

"Went well in a pie, then?" inquired Greeves, for Straker was a very exact man.

"No, sir, it did not go well in a pie, nor yet in a pudd'n."

"Sorry for that, Straker," said Greeves, looking concerned. (For it was the worst tactics possible to offend Straker.) "Hope it was all right. Present to me."

"It was *stuffed*, sir," said Straker, abruptly.

Greeves stared hard at the lodge-keeper, his head listing strongly to starboard.

"Stuffed, Straker?"

"It was a rabbit-*skin* filled with moss and mould and rags and such," said Straker.

Greeves passed on.

"And he'll find," shouted Straker over his shoulder to his wife, busy with some ironing in the hind-quarters of the lodge, "that I'm the wrong person to give a dummy rabbit to. Think he didn't know! And him one of these nateral historians, always examinin' the insides of creatures! He did it on me—and a perfect, too. If he 'adn't been a perfect I'd a-slung it at him."

So Greeves, in concealing his gift of a rabbit, had made an enemy. The account against the Secret Seven was piling up. Fender's frog. Phillips's ink. His own rabbit. Straker's dire disappointment.

Now it fell to the prefects to assist in collecting and arranging the examination papers, and it occurred to Greeves, handling so many different handwritings, that here was presented a chance of discovering the author of the rabbit label. It behoved him for his own dignity's sake to discover the donor of the rabbit, and he was likewise anxious to reveal, if possible, the author of the ink outrage. It was his last term, and he felt he would like to clear up the mystery ere the school knew him no more. Otherwise, the perpetrator or perpetrators of the "ink" and "rabbit" would go scot-free for ever, seeing that he, Greeves, held the sole evidence of their guilt. Frequently, therefore, was his head poised on one shoulder or the other as he examined the capital "S's" in the papers he collected.

So keen did Greeves become on elucidating the mystery that he found himself lying awake at night thinking over it.

He went over the thing from the very beginning.

Fender gets a frog at breakfast, sent by the Secret Seven.

The writing on the label attached to the frog box is eventually traced to Aubert.

Phillips's desk is filled with ink. Attached to the lid is a label similar to that sent with the frog. Aubert acknowledges that the writing is his, but disclaims, on behalf of self and fellow frog-senders, any responsibility for the outrage.

A stuffed rabbit is left in his (Greeves's) desk. The wording of the label is the same, but the writing is different.

Were the frog, the ink, and the rabbit the work of one gang? Were the frog and the ink the work of one gang, and the rabbit of a separate one? Was the frog the work of a

gang, and were the ink and the rabbit perpetrated by a lone hand? But why should the ink and the rabbit labels be in different writing? If the original Secret Seven was dissolved after it had sent the frog, why should the ink label be, as admitted, in the writing of their penman?

Greeves would go to sleep with his brain in a tangle of this kind, and one morning he awoke to find himself completing the thought he had gone to sleep with.

Why should the ink label be, as admitted——

The getting-up bell had not ceased ringing three minutes when Greeves leapt out of bed. stirred—was almost to Greeves like getting up in the middle of the night, but he got up. For he knew he would find Aubert working. With promotion to the Sixth looming as a possibility before him, and largely depending on the "exams" he did, Aubert had put away childish things this term, and was working like a nigger.

Aubert, making amends for winter slacking, had his head between his hands and his nose over his book, when his study door opened and the proboscis of Greeves was thrust in.

"Do I interrupt?"

"You do," said Aubert, ungraciously.

Fender felt himself poised in the air, then "Quick!" said a voice, and with a splash he dropped.

It was not his way to leap out of bed. Rather, to crawl by sections. The morning sun, crying, "Come out! Come out!" merely caused Greeves to turn over for another snooze. That is the way with long men. But to-day he leapt out, giving the boys of his dormitory a great surprise.

Nail a thought while it's hot. That is what Nathaniel Hawthorne said, didn't he, though in different words? Life is so short, and ideas are too precious to "keep." If you get a good idea, rise in the middle of the night and work it out. Rising so early—not another soul had

"Then I must."

And Greeves, in Norfolk coat and flannel bags, insinuated himself with a serpent-like motion into the room and closed the door.

"I want to ask you something about that frog."

"Hang the frog."

"Thought I'd ask you while the thought was frizzling. It's about the ink."

"Well?"

"When you wrote that label for Fender you wrote a few dozen more that somebody must have annexed?"

Aubert sighed.

"We enclosed two cards—one pasted in the box and the other loose."

Greeves started as if someone had applied a galvanic battery to his spine.

"You didn't tell me that before!"

"Didn't think of it," said Aubert.

"Then," said Greeves, his head sheering over to the left, "it's left with you."

"*What's* left with me?" demanded Aubert irritably.

Greeves's head swung over to the right.

"The honour of the Secret Seven is impugned. Whoever mucked up Phillips's desk with that ink intended suspicion to fall on the fellows who sent Fender his frog."

Aubert sat up straight.

"There's a very verminous sound about that, Polly!"

Greeves retired to the door.

"And in two seconds I'll tell you whether that *was* the idea."

Aubert returned to his book. Some five minutes had elapsed when Greeves reappeared. In one hand was an exercise book, in the other a slip of paper. It was the slip that had accompanied the rabbit. He opened the exercise book and put it before Aubert. Then he laid the slip of paper on the book.

"See the capital 'S'? Same in both—what?"

"Like as two pins."

"*Got 'im!*" said Greeves with a radiant smile.

VIII

YES, well ended. Success waiting upon him to its close, Fender's school career had finished in a blaze of glory. For he had carried off the Essay prize—five golden sovereigns—and, moreover, had had the felicity of reading his essay before the distinguished company assembled on Speech Day. The Royal Duke who had distributed the prizes had beamed graciously upon him; noble lords and ladies had patted their patrician hands; and the school had given him a generous cheer as he walked back to his seat.

With a chosen few—Greeves one of them—who were leaving, Fender had sat late with the head master, talking over the future. Fender had talked about the East, about his glowing prospects in far climes. Fender had talked and the others had listened. The others may have had things to say to the head master, but Fender did not give them much chance of saying them. And so his school days had ended, as they had begun, with Fender talking—about Fender.

The others of the chosen few trooped away from the Head's house arm-in-arm, leaving Fender to bring up the rear in solitary state. Fender felt it a little, but he could afford to smile ironically. They were jealous of him.

The other fellows glanced affectionately, and perhaps a little sadly, at the grey old buildings bathed in moonlight. After to-morrow they would never know the old school again as boys. For good or ill they were faring forth on life's difficult path. To-morrow, with the first step they planted upon the road without the entrance gates, they ceased to be of Greyhouse School.

But no such reflections occurred to Fender. Here he was curbed and gaoled; to-morrow he would spread his wings and fly.

He shared a room with three other fellows, a small room well away from the racket and turmoil of the other dormitories. Their regular breathing told him that his room companions were asleep. By the moonlight shining in through the open, uncurtained windows, Fender undressed and got into bed, and lay in that agreeable state of healthy sleepiness that yet permits one to think of pleasant things.

And he found that he had but one regret—that he had not unmasked the Secret Seven. He thought of the frog, and that was not a palatable memory. Win essay prizes as he might, his name was "Frog." He would be remembered as Frog Fender. The thought intruded coldly among the pleasant memories, and his teeth set hard. If he could only have discovered the identity of the Secret Seven, what an added interest to his life it would have been to hit back at them in the subtle fashions he would have devised! But they had remained undiscoverable, and would ever remain.

The touch of a hand made him start up.

Seven forms in rudely made masks stood about his bed. Was he dreaming! If so, his dream would appear to be terribly realistic, for a hand by no means phantom-like swept the clothes from him; another, before he could cry out, jammed some sort of cloth over his face, and then he was lifted in an undreamlike grip and borne out of the room.

It was no use struggling; they were too many and too strong for him.

He felt himself descending a staircase, then going along the level.

The procession paused, a door was opened.

They seemed to be poising him over something, then he was lowered a little. Then——

"Quick!" said a voice, the hands were suddenly snatched away from him, and—

Splash! he fell.

A low chuckle, a hasty movement of departing feet, the shutting of a door, and he rose, gasping, to tear off his bandage and behold himself in the moonlight *dripping black*.

With a shudder he glanced down. He was in a bath of black water. Some of it trickled into his mouth, and the taste seemed familiar. It was *ink!*

He sprang out. There were two baths in the room. Flying to the other he turned on the taps, and a hot and cold stream rushed into the bath. Locking the door, he tore off his pyjamas, and, seizing soap and sponge, he tubbed himself as he had never tubbed himself before. Finally, clean again, he enveloped himself in a huge bath-towel hanging on the door—everything necessary had been thoughtfully provided—and crept back to his dormitory.

To find, lying across his pillow, and quite legible in the moonlight, a message in printed capitals that were only too familiar:—

"WITH COMPLIMENTS FROM THE SECRET SEVEN."

THE END

SELFISH

(Simpson, who has been a little "subdued," has been left to look after the lunch.)

The Others: "Here, I say, where are all the sandwiches and pork pies and things gone? Have you eaten them?"

Simpson: "*Eaten* them! No, I couldn't stand the sight of them. I've heaved them all overboard!"

BRITISH STAMPS USED ABROAD

IN fulfilment of a long-standing promise to the philatelic readers of THE CAPTAIN, let me briefly describe the stamps known to collectors as "British-used-Abroad." The subject is of special interest at the present time, for since my last stamp article was published in these pages, British-stamps-used-abroad have been admitted to the leading philatelic catalogue, that of Messrs. Stanley Gibbons, Limited, and this, of course, has given them a definite status as collectable varieties.

By "British-used-Abroad," we mean the ordinary British postage stamps which from one cause or another have been issued for use at various colonial and foreign post offices. The British stamps which have been at various times *overprinted* for use abroad, as the stamps of

Early postmarks of Malta, Gibraltar, and Constantinople

the Levant or of the Morocco Agencies, are not classed as "British-used-Abroad," because when overprinted the stamps are no longer ordinary British postage stamps.

In the articles on this subject written some years ago by Mr. I. J. Bernstein and Mr. Chas. Nissen, the British-used-Abroad stamps were divided into seven different groups, and if I am to make the matter quite clear to Captainites perhaps I had better follow the same plan. The seven groups are as follows:—

(1) British possessions in Europe.
(2) The Levant and Egypt.
(3) The British West Indies.
(4) South and Central America and the Spanish and Danish West Indies.
(5) British naval stations.
(6) British army field post offices.
(7) The Royal Niger Company.

Now for a few brief explanatory notes upon these groups.

Group I. embraces Malta, Gibraltar, and Cyprus. Offices were opened in Malta and Gibraltar in 1857; in Cyprus in 1878. The Cyprus office was closed in 1880; those at Malta and Gibraltar in 1884. From 1860 to 1884 there were two offices in Malta; one for the sale of the locally issued halfpenny stamps, which, however, were available only for local postage; the other for the sale of British stamps for all external correspondence.

Group II. comprises Constantinople, Smyrna, Beyrout and Salonica, Alexandria and Suez. The offices at Constantinople, Beyrout, and Smyrna are still open, but the stamps actually issued there have been overprinted in local currency since 1885. All current British stamps remain available for use, but owing to the issue of a special set overprinted "Levant," their use nowadays is only permitted as a matter of courtesy.

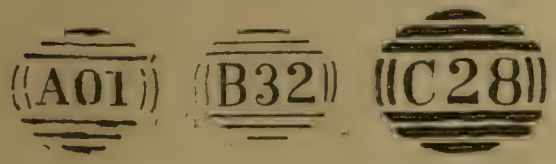
Group III.—Here we see the extension of the system to the British West Indies. The Postmaster-General, in his annual report for 1858, says: "It having been found that the use of British stamps in Malta, Gibraltar, and Constantinople led to no forgery, the privilege has been extended to the British West Indies."

Offices were established in the principal towns in British Guiana and some of the West Indies about the middle of 1858. They all ceased to use British stamps in May, 1860, but still retained for their postmarks the office numbers allotted to them by the British Post Office.

Group IV. comprises the post offices opened from time to time in Central and South America, beginning with Buenos Ayres, Montevideo, Valparaiso; in Central America at Panama, in

Mexico, etc; and in the foreign West Indian islands of Hayti, Cuba, Porto Rico, etc. The dates of the disestablishment of these offices vary from 1877 to 1882, and practically coincide with the entry into the Postal Union of the various countries in which they were situated.

Group V.—The various British naval stations employed British stamp obliteration and "office



Early postmarks of Jamaica, Buenos Ayres, and Monte Video.

numbers" from 1860 to 1865. They were located in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, China, Japan, Hong Kong, etc., the British Coast of Africa, and North America.

Group VI.—In this division are placed the stamps used by the British Army post office on active service, as follows:—

(1) In the Crimea, 1854-6.
(2) In Egypt and the Soudan, 1884-5.
(3) In South Africa, 1899-1902.

Group VII. embraces the British stamps without overprint, which were used at three offices in the territory belonging to the Royal Niger Company from the year 1895 until the territory was merged into the Niger Coast Protectorate, and divided into Northern and Southern Nigeria in January, 1900.

It is only by their postmarks that the British stamps used at foreign and colonial offices can be distinguished from the ordinary home-used labels. The chief thing the philatelic Captainite needs, therefore, is a concise list of the office numbers, or distinctive letters, used for these cancellations. And this I will now endeavour to supply:—

I.—British Possessions in Europe.

Malta: the letter "M"; later A25.
Gibraltar: the letter "G"; later A26.
Cyprus: 942, 969, 971, 975, 981, 982, D47, D48.

II.—The Levant and Egypt.

Constantinople: the letter "C."
Stamboul: the letter "S."
Alexandria or Cairo: B01; Suez, B02; Smyrna, F87; Beyrout, G06.

III.—British West Indies.

For Jamaica and various places in the Leeward and Windward Islands, etc., the office numbers run as follows: A01 to A15 inclusive, A18, A27 to A49 inclusive, A50 to A78 inclusive.

IV.—South and Central America, and the Foreign West Indies.

For South America (Buenos Ayres, Montevideo, Panama, etc., etc.): B32, C28, C30, C35 to C43 inclusive, C56, C57, D74, D87, E88, F69.
For Central America (Tampico, Bahia, La Guayra, etc.) C60, C63, C64, C81 to C83 inclusive, and D22.

For the foreign West Indies (Cuba, Hayti, Porto Rico, etc.): C51, C58, C59, C61, C86 to C88 inclusive, D26, E53, F83 to F85 inclusive, F88, 247 and 582.

V.—British Naval Stations.

For the Pacific, Atlantic, and other Naval Stations the numbers are A79 to A98 inclusive, B03, B12, B53, B56, B57, B62, B64, C79; also the letters "B" and "H."

VI.—British Army Field Offices; and VII.—The Royal Niger Company.

The postmarks used in the Crimea, 1854 to 1857, contained at first a crown and stars, and later, a cipher and stars. The Egyptian marks, 1882 to 1885, are clearly lettered "British Army Post Office, Egypt"; the cancellations employed during the South African War, 1900 to 1902, are inscribed, "Field Post Office, B.O., British Army, S. Africa."
There is no need to describe the large cancellations applied to British stamps in the Royal Niger Company's territories during the period 1894-1900, as they are quite clear, distinctive, and self-explanatory.

As given in this condensed form the list does not look a very formidable one, but it must be remembered that the majority of these postmarks are known to exist on several different values of British stamps—to say nothing of the many different plate numbers of the penny and other denominations! The very able list of these stamps, compiled for Messrs. Stanley Gibbons' catalogue by Mr. Charles Nissen, runs to considerably more than 1,500 items, *without counting plate numbers*, and as the catalogue prices range from 1s. to 40s. (with very few shilling items!), it will be seen that this is not a poor man's department of the philatelic hobby. There are considerably more items unpriced than priced in Messrs. Gibbons' list, and it is quite certain that a complete collection of British-used-Abroad, if indeed it could ever be formed, would mean an expenditure of a considerable sum of money.

But although Captainites may deem the specialising of British issues used abroad a rather hopeless task, they will like to have a few representative examples in their

Early postmarks of Cyprus, Alexandria, and Beyrout.

British collections. My advice is to purchase without hesitation any that are seen on offer at reasonable prices, as the market is steadily rising. Aided by the brief summary given above, my readers should have little difficulty in identifying any specimens they may possess, but if further advice be wanted as to values or elucidation of postmarks, I shall be very happy to help any reader to the best of my information and knowledge.

JOTTINGS ON PHILATELY

THE Royal Philatelic Society has instituted a series of medals to be awarded annually to philatelists rendering meritorious service to the hobby. The "Crawford" medal, so named in honour of the memory of the late Earl of Crawford, is to be conferred each year upon the author of the best book, article, or series of articles dealing with philately. There will also be two other medals—one to be called the "Tapling" medal, in honour of the late Mr. T. K. Tapling, who bequeathed his splendid collection to the British Museum; and the other to be styled the "Tilleard" medal, a tribute to the memory of the late Mr. J. A. Tilleard, for so many years hon. secretary of the Royal Philatelic Society—and these will be awarded to members of the "R. P. S." who may distinguish themselves by meritorious work. The "Crawford" medal is to be silver gilt; the others will be silver.

Now that the annual philatelic congress has become quite a settled institution there are probably many collectors who would like to "read up" the past history of this "Parliament of Philately." To enable them to do so a concise history of the first four congresses has been prepared by Mr. F. A. Bellamy and Mr. J. J. Darlow, and copies of this may be obtained for 1*s.* 3*d.* each, post free, from Mr. F. Reichenheim, who is secretary of the Permanent Congress Committee, 29, Holland Villas Road, Kensington, London, W.

Stamp collecting supports a greater number of special journals and magazines than any other collecting hobby in the world, and with a view to protecting their interests and acting in concert for the good of philately, a number of the editors and publishers of these periodicals, together with various of their regular contributors, have formed a club to be known as the Stamp Scribes. Regular meetings are to be held in London, commencing in October.

NOTEWORTHY NEW ISSUES

(*News from* CAPTAIN *readers abroad as to new issues, or changes in existing issues, of postage stamps, is always welcome.*—STAMP EDITOR.)

The 1d. carmine King George, one of the new issues for the British Solomon Islands.

BECHUANALAND. — The British Georgian stamps are now overprinted "Bechuanaland Protectorate" for use in this territory. The 1*d.*, 1*s.*, and 5*s.* values have been so treated down to the time of writing.

BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS have now been supplied with King's Head stamps, inscribed "Postage and Revenue." The ½*d.*, 1*d.*, 2*d.*, and 2½*d.* have been issued, and probably the higher values will be available ere this number of THE CAPTAIN is published.

CANADA gives us a special "Cartier" issue of postage stamps in honour of the Etienne Cartier centenary celebrations. The stamps of 1c. to 50c. carry the following designs:—

1	cent,	King George and Queen Mary.
2	cents,	Cartier Memorial.
5	,,	Birthplace of Cartier.
7	,,	Prince of Wales.
10	,,	Victoria Bridge opened by Cartier in 1880.
20	,,	C.P.R. train passing through a cornfield, inscribed "All aboard for the West."
50	,,	Cartier's arms and motto "France et sans dol," inscribed "O Canada, mon pays, mes amours!"

FRENCH COLONIES.—Collectors who are not thoroughly sick of this branch of the hobby may be glad to know that yet another series has been added to the list. The new stamps are for the French possessions in India, and are inscribed, "Etablissements Francais dans l'Inde." As usual the stamps are in two shapes—a perpendicular oblong for the low values, and a horizontal oblong for the high. The former have a picture of a native idol, and are of the face-values, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 centimes.

On the stamps of higher denominations the design shows a view of a temple, with a lake and foliage in the foreground. Here the values are, 35, 40, 45, 50, and 75 centimes; and 1, 2, and 5 francs.

ITALY is issuing parcel-post stamps of a novel description. The oblong design is in two parts and perforated down the centre—the one part being affixed to the parcel, and the other to an official receipt. The values and colours promised (for they are not yet issued at the moment of writing) are:—

5	centesimi	brown.	1 lira violet.
10	,,	blue	2 lire green.
25	,,	red.	3 ,, yellow.
50	,,	orange.	4 ,, grey-brown.

RUSSIA.—The new stamps, hourly expected at the moment of writing, are to be in three designs: (1) the Monastery of Ipatjef; (2) the statue of Peter the Great in Petersburg; and (3) an allegorical figure of "Russia."

SWITZERLAND has issued new stamps infinitely superior to those hitherto supplied. On the centime values there is a strong, virile head of William Tell; on the franc values, which are very large oblong stamps, appear various views of the Alps, the 10 francs having in addition to a view of the famous "Jungfrau," an allegorical figure of Helvetia.

One of the Swiss new issues—the 10c. red, with head of William Tell.

Pomp and Pageantry at Pyewich

By EDWARD CHICHELE

With a huge wooden beaker in his hand, Somerset suddenly rose and addressed the King.

PAGEANTS are great sport. They held a ripper, last summer, at a place on the coast called Pyewich. I'll tell you all about it.

We have a chap at school called Owen; but he's commonly known as Virgil, because he spouts poetry. Well, his mater took a house for the holidays at Pyewich, and asked four of us men in the Fourth down there. There were myself, Hopkinson, Swete, and a rummy chap called Bryson-White, whom his intimates called the Squidger. The Squidger's a rare good sort, but rummy, as I've said, and you never know what he'll be up to next.

Well, when we arrived at Pyewich we found it in a tremendous tear over a pageant to be held in the first week of September, all run by local talent, and organised by Mr. Borrowcraft, one of the big-wigs of the neighbourhood. The show was to give a picture of England from the days of the Norman Conquest to those of Elizabeth, and was being advertised all over the shop.

I expect you've been to Pyewich? It's really quite a decent place; a bit slow, perhaps, but topping for the summer holidays, and we five men were putting in a great time there.

The only fly in our ointment—as Virgil said—was young Borrowcraft, the old man's son; we could not stand him at any price. He insisted upon hanging on to our little crowd, on the strength of the fact that Owen's mater rented the house from his governor. The latter was bad enough, but his son was worse. The old man was one of those people who address you as "my good lad," who patronise you, and fire off feeble wheezes. They seem to fancy a fellow never wants to be serious. And as he wore a ridiculous white beard he was known among the more flippant locals as "Uncle Billy." But his son!

There was something absolutely unwholesome about Borrowcraft Junior. Of the Squidger's age and size, he was anæmic, pimply, and put on tremendous frills. He was no good at any games (sneered at them as a "waste of time"), and he could never see when he wasn't wanted. I think he got this side from the local Grammar School, where he was by way of being the big dog—and wouldn't let you forget it. Nobody could snub him, not even the Squidger—and that says something. And he used to hang about us till we grew very sick of him. Nothing short of personal violence would keep the young bounder in his place.

Well, one hot evening, we five had just returned from a sail when up comes our aversion, bubbling over with importance.

"I say, you fellows," he began, "have you heard the news?"

"What news?" said we.

"I'm to do Edward the Sixth in the pageant."

"Hope you'll like it," snapped Swete, whose temper suffered a trifle in the heat.

"Bit of a bore, you know," drawled Borrowcraft. "But they won't let me off!"

Now this was silly affectation on his part, because he was as pleased as Punch really, and we knew it. And why should he not have been?

"And what does Edward the Sixth do?" asked Virgil.

"I can't conceive what they profess to teach

you at Refferton," sneered the other. "I thought any infant knew that the Pyewich Grammar School was founded by Edward the Sixth. And the scene I play is *the* feature of the show."

"So I should imagine," remarked Squidger, quietly. "But what is it?"

"The founding of the Grammar School, of course."

"Oh," murmured Squidger. "I see."

"Anything to swot up?" inquired Hopkinson.

"Oh—ah, yes; a few pages," swaggered Borrowcraft. "But those won't trouble me. The elocution is the main thing. Everyone admires my elocution. That's why I'm chosen."

"Yes, you can spout," yawned Swete. "But don't you think you'd better pop off, and begin to learn it?"

"Oh, there's no hurry," said Borrowcraft.

So he stuck there, jawing; boring us with the details of his costume, and a full report of what his mother and his father and his sisters said when they heard the news, and all the rest of it. Underneath everything were yards of patronage, and the sham of thinking the whole thing a nuisance. If he had been decent and owned up that he was jolly proud of himself, we should have congratulated him. But as he carried on we were fairly fed up with it. At last we told him as much.

"Besides, Borrowcraft," pursued the Squidger, with a gentle smile, "you are not the only person who can play the part."

Young Borrowcraft flared up at once.

"Oh, yes, I am," he cried, drawn out of his pose. "Certainly I am. That's just it. No one else in Pyewich could do Edward."

"Why?"

"Why? Because they couldn't!"

On this we fled and left him.

But I can assure you that the next few days were a nightmare. Wherever we went, there came Borrowcraft also, yapping of nothing but pageant. Fortunately, rehearsals began to clip his time; but when Swete wanted to go and chip him at these the Squidger put his foot down. It wouldn't be fair, he insisted. But I think it would have served the chap right, for he took such tremendous pains to impress his importance upon everybody in the place, and sent each of us a marked copy of the local paper, which gave a whole paragraph to him. I'll read you the cutting:—

It is a matter of sincere congratulation that in our forthcoming pageant the character of Edward VI. has been entrusted to Augustus Edwin Borrowcraft, the son of our prominent townsman. His magnificent powers of elocution and earnest appreciation of the part are guarantee of a dignified and impressive representation of the great scene which must prove of such absorbing interest, namely, the foundation by the boy King of our royal and ancient Grammar School. On reference to the programme, readers will be reminded that Mr. Borrowcraft himself will portray the Lord Protector Somerset.

"Somerset!" ejaculated Swete, when we first saw the paragraph. "Who was Somerset?"

"The Protector, ape!" replied Virgil. "He looked after things for Edward. In reality he ran the whole caboodle. Later on, they huyked his nut off."

"Good!" gurgled Swete.

"Anyhow," interrupted the Squidger, "Uncle Billy will look great guns in the part. We must go and see a rehearsal. But no rotting, mind."

So off we trotted to the meadows where the rehearsals were held. We had only to scale the large hoarding that had been erected to keep people out, and there we put in a very decent couple of hours. Without their costume the performers looked awful goats. But Virgil took most interest in the talking part of the show, which was done, he told us, in blank verse, hatched up specially by some duke or other in London.

"They call it the book, you know," he explained.

"We must get a copy of the book," said Squidger.

They succeeded in getting one, and I noticed the two enjoying it a good deal during the next

We could not stand young Borrowcraft at any price.

fortnight. But the yapping part didn't interest the rest of us; we were too taken up with young Borrowcraft.

As the great day drew near, local excitement grew higher and higher, and the London papers began to give notices of the Pyewich Pageant. More and more came the visitors, until the few hotels were crowded, and you couldn't see an "Apartments" bill in one window on the front. Many of the Grammar School boys, the Chairman of the District Council, and other big pots were playing in the great scene, and every notice and advertisement impressed the point that the tableau of Edward the Sixth was—as Monsieur Doret calls it—the *pièce de resistance* of the show. In fact, it was much more than a mere tableau, because of all the spouting that I've mentioned.

So far as we could understand, Somerset was to yap to Edward about the beauties of the place, and then the "greybeards of Pyewich" (see programme) were to worry round for their old school. "Whereupon the young monarch, with that zeal for the advancement of education and learning which has shed an immortal lustre on his name, will respond in impressive terms, and found the scholastic establishment which to this day stands in Pyewich."

I've told you all this that you may appreciate how the two Borrowcrafts had the fattest parts, especially old man Borrowcraft. Nor were any of the visitors or pressmen to forget it.

Well, the immortal morning broke gloriously, and long before eleven o'clock, when the show was timed to start, the grounds were packed. The district had turned out to a man, woman, and child; sightseers had rolled up from all over the country; and each newspaper was represented by "Our Special Correspondent." You never saw such a squash. You must just imagine the scene, for I could never do it justice.

The local butcher was absolutely great as Archbishop Lanfranc, and gave William Rufus (the watchmaker) a proper dressing down for prigging things out of abbeys.

We five had booked topping seats in the front row, close to the barrier, with Virgil's mater and her friends. But they hadn't been started for ten minutes before poor old Squidger found the sun much too hot for him in the front, so he and Virgil—who being a sort of host insisted on accompanying him—backed out and retired somewhere to the rear, where they would be sheltered from the sun by the people in front of them. For us other men that took a bit of the gilt off the gingerbread. But it couldn't be helped.

The early part was simply ripping. The local butcher, a fine figure of a man, played Archbishop Lanfranc, and gave William Rufus (the watchmaker) a proper dressing down for prigging things out of abbeys. But the milkman popped out from behind a bush and shot William, making room for Henry, who held a Witenagemot and swore he'd never smile again. This looked a bit gloomy, but things bucked up

again when a body of the Pyewich Territorials, made up as Stephen's barons, came and ragged about, laying the village waste and throwing everybody they could collar into "loathsome dungeons." But they'd not got through before Henry the Second "crushed them with a heavy hand," and drew up some Constitutions of Clarendon. There was very little for Richard, because he was never at home, but the greengrocer signed the Magna Charta without turning a hair. Exactly what happened to Henry the Third I quite forget, but I fancy that he refused to pay back come coin he'd borrowed from the Pope. Next came the three Edwards, all toppers, and fighting galore. But the best sport was trying to spot the people you knew as they turned up one after the other in different disguises. The curate made a ripping Jack Cade.

Mr. Spillett, the barber in the High Street, would have been quite good, too, as Warwick the Kingmaker, only his armour kept coming loose, and he forgot his part. At the Battle of Towton he did his best to brain Edward, until somebody told him that he was fighting on the same side, and then his horse ran away with him. This saved him from being slaughtered at Barnet.

As a matter of fact, that was the only fiasco; everything else was great. So the spectators agreed when lunch followed Henry the Eighth. Then you heard nothing on all sides but praise. The Pyewich Pageant was a success.

If only he had remembered his part, and his armour had not kept coming loose, the barber would have been quite good as Warwick, the Kingmaker.

"What comes next?" cried Swete, as soon as we had finished our grub.

"Next!" roared Hopkinson. "Why, *the* great scene, of course! Borrowcraft and the Grammar School!"

A hush of expectancy—as the papers say—settled over the ground while the trumpets proclaimed the big event.

A really pretty tableau it made. Before us we saw the hamlet of Pyewich as it is supposed to have been in 1552; on our left the old church, on the right a few cottages and larger dwellings. In front stretched the green, very much as you see it to-day. Overhead a blue sky, and, in the great silence, the sound of the waves as they broke on the shore behind us.

On the green, several village elders were grouped, obviously discussing something. Children were playing around, and an old serf, very bent, moved doddering along.

When a good ten minutes had been given us to appreciate the picture, two of the elders advanced to the front, and one of them turned to his companion, and began to spout:—

"This day the King and puissant Somerset
Ride through the land; and since their course runs hard
And nigh our pleasant borders, it may chance
That they shall turn aside and rest with us,
Ere they fare on."

The other, who had been listening with one hand to his ear—as old johnnies always do on the stage—straightened himself up, and replied:—

"Well shall that be. Thrice well! Before I die
I fain would look upon the royal face.
Rumour, whose tongue finds oft such base employ,
Dwells sweetly with the name of our fair lord."

No sooner were these words out of his mouth than a third villager, obviously of lower order, came pelting up to them, and declared:—

"Grave sirs, we are prepared; and wait
For nothing but His Majesty's approach."

With this a flourish of trumpets was heard in the distance, and came louder and nearer: then a body of lords and gentlemen caracolling

—as per programme—on the scene. With their arrival the houses discharged a crowd of locals of all kinds, who collected round the greybeards, and so stood, listening respectfully to the leading horseman. He bent low in his saddle, waved a sort of triangular fool's cap, and declaimed at the top of his voice :—

" Thus with his greeting speaks our loving King—
' It is our pleasure, with fair Somerset,
To take some ease, and to repose ourselves
In this sweet spot.' They follow on me hard."

Again a trumpet blared. On prancing chargers figures were approaching, each in bright armour. Side by side they came: Somerset erect and haughty, most gorgeous, and bending in talk with the young King. You would never have recognised the two Borrowcrafts. Practically nothing but the eyes of the old boy were visible; while a light gauze mask, half veil and half visor, hung from Borrowcraft Junior's helm, concealing his pimply mug. Very graceful and slim he seemed.

Everybody cheered like mad as the two cantered up, with their retinue of nobles and pages, and ladies on little horses which Hopkinson said were palfreys. The elders in the tableau ran to their stirrups, and knelt to help them off. But Somerset raised his hand.

In glowing verse he expressed the King's pleasure to rest under their tree, and ordered them to prepare a banquet. This was soon done, and disposed of in about five minutes—as such feeds always are at theatres. Next the loving cup was passed round, and Edward pledged Somerset, and the Lord Protector pledged his " dear cousin and sweet sovereign," and they had a great time. Encouraged by the King's affability, the Pyewich elders lost their nervousness, and one after another they fired off rhymes at him, extolling the beauties of Pyewich, and its loyalty, and so forth. Then a very, very ancient joker, a cross between a wizard and a seer, came forward and predicted the manner in which the place would rise and rise in the far future. This allusion to their present growth pleased the locals no end.

During all this time there had been practically no speaking part for young Borrowcraft. But his hour had come.

At one end of the long table sat Somerset, with a huge wooden beaker in his hand. At the other, Edward gazed regally upon the crowd. Once I caught him looking bang at us, so I winked away all I knew, but he didn't seem to notice.

Suddenly, Somerset rose, and spoke down the length of the table to the King :—

" Most gracious liege, these folk of small estate,
Who have such entertainment spread for us,
And basked beneath the sunshine of thy smile,
Crave thee a boon ! "

" Say on, my loving lord," answered Edward.
So Somerset said on :—

" Thy wisdom and thy favour to the arts,
The gentle disposition of thy mind,
Have spread beyond the confines of thy throne,
And questing to each corner of thy realm,
Borne on the wing of happy circumstance,
Have knocked upon their ears. In duteous love
They beg thee give them, of thy sovereign grace,
Such token as to others thou hast given."

" Nay, bid them fear not; bid them ope their mind," recited Edward, still seated.

Somerset bridled himself up, looked all round, cleared his throat, and continued, in a louder voice still :—

" Their tender offspring sport upon these meads,
And cheat the hours of all that pallid care
That preys on bearded man. In such poor paths
Of learning as lie open to their feet
They wander in dispiteous content.
Grant that the sickly culture of these plants
Be fostered in thy kindly countenance !
So shall they bloom to beauty unapproached,
And 'stablish aye the glory of thy name."

Well, at this fine speech, of course all the spectators cheered like thunder. And when we'd finished, King Edward rose for the first time. He drew himself up to his full height, shot out an armoured arm, and posed. In dead silence we waited his reply.

It came, uttered as distinctly as possible. But it sounded funny, somehow :—

" Speak plainer English—that's a useful rule.
Wouldst thou I found *another* Grammar School ? "

Swete burst out laughing, and a few others in our neighbourhood tittered, while most

people were feeling a bit bewildered, I'm sure, because the response to old Borrowcraft's grand language wasn't at all in keeping. Surely young Borrowcraft had not caught a touch of the sun? I noticed a stir among the players themselves; one of them whispered to the King. Then Somerset, nonplussed for the second, repeated his last two lines, that Edward might get the cue again:—

"So shall they bloom to beauty unapproached,
And 'stablish aye the glory of thy name."

The King had remained standing. Dramatically he waved his extended arm, faced the audience fair and square, and declaimed, gravely:—

"Fair coz, sweet coz, I've stodged in top-hole style;
From Grammar Schools I want to rest awhile.
Besides, you know, I'm not so very mean,
Already I have founded seventeen!"

On which he sat down again, most dignified.

A regular roar went up. The most dense among the audience could twig that this was not the written part. All crowded forward to get another look at the players, while Somerset tore open his visor, and disclosed the features of old man Borrowcraft, black as night. A murmur rose from the "greybeards" and the nobles and the crew at the banquet.

Then suddenly old Borrowcraft jumped up, and strode round the table, evidently in a tearing wax. We watched him grab the arm of King Edward, and mutter something in his ear. Then he went back to his place, and shouted his concluding lines for the third time:—

"So shall they bloom to beauty unapproached,
And 'stablish aye the glory of thy name."

I'm sure the crowd thought it funny enough to hear these old lines again. But now Somerset was holding up his hand to call attention to the reply. It would come right this time, surely! Certainly it came clearly enough:—

"I think that founding Grammar Schools is silly.
I'd rather found a tuck-shop, Uncle Billy!"

That settled it. Word went round that Borrowcraft junior had had a sunstroke or a fit or something. Certainly Edward the Sixth's next action lent colour to the tale. For gathering his robes and trappings about him, he made a bee-line for the church, and, once behind it, he vanished for good and all. The Pyewich Pageant knew him no more. In a jiffy the grounds were cleared for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, the final tableau. We waited to see that, and then went full pelt home to compare notes with Virgil and the Squidger. We hoped they'd been able to see all the sport.

We found them in the drawing-room, the Squidger rather red and hot about the face.

"I say——" began Swete.

"Yes," interjected the Squidger, "it was a spree, wasn't it?"

"But could you hear it all?" cried Hopkinson.

"You bet," said the Squidger, very calm.

"Young Borrowcraft must be mad," said I.

Squidger smiled happily.

"Did none of you recognise the voice?" he murmured.

Then, and only then, we tumbled to the truth. But we pressed him for particulars.

"Well," he explained, "as young Borrowcraft and I are about the same height and build I knew that no one could twig the difference unless the voice gave me away. So I disguised my voice for all I was worth."

"But—however—did—you work it?" spluttered Swete.

"Quite simply, my son. Rather curious, wasn't it, that after lunch when they were marshalling for the Grammar School part, young Borrowcraft had disappeared; he couldn't be found anywhere." He paused a moment, and then went on, quietly: "Funnily enough, too, I happened to turn up and volunteer for the part. At first old Borrowcraft wouldn't hear of it; but I pressed hard, and forked out that copy of the book which Virgil and I bought, to show him how I had studied it. Well, they were forced to have an Edward or chuck the great scene, and, after all, old Borrowcraft knew me. And there you are," he broke off, highly satisfied.

"But why didn't young Borrowcraft turn up?" persisted Swete.

The Squidger smiled.

"Ah, you must ask Virgil that," he said. "Perhaps he'll tell you; I shan't. But the little prig's as right as a trivet, and safe home by now."

"But those ripping verses you spouted?" said I.

"Oh, shut up," he snapped. "Virgil hatched them up for me days and days ago!"

Anyhow, for my part I was jolly glad that we were all leaving Pyewich the next day.

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

By HERBERT STRANG

Illustrated by RENÉ BULL

A Story of Mystery and Adventure in Tibet

CHAPTER XVIII

UNDER THE STARS

FORRESTER and his enemies alike were for the moment paralysed by the horror of the tragic scene. Before they had recovered their wits, Beresford dashed up behind his friend, and cried to him to tear up the plank. Only one who had not seen the actual occurrence could have intervened at such a moment.

"Quick, man!" cried Beresford, amazed at the other's sluggishness.

Pulling himself together, Forrester stooped and helped Beresford to haul the plank to their own side of the ledge, leaving an impassable gap between them and their enemies. Only by swimming could they now be reached, and Forrester felt, with a return of his nausea, that the priest, after the object lesson he had just had, would recoil from so terrible a risk.

"Bring the plank back into the cavern," said Beresford. "There's no time to lose."

They hurried back. On hearing Forrester's shout, Beresford had descended the shaft with reckless speed, and hurried through the passage after him. When he gained the cavern, pursuer and pursued had disappeared through the entrance. Dashing after them, he levelled the two Negritos, now at last awaking from their torpor, with blows left and right. He said afterwards that it was monstrously unfair—like hitting children. Too late to witness the fate of the priest, he perceived what had escaped Forrester's overwrought mind—that only the destruction of the bridge could save them from the Old Man's immediate vengeance. Whether it would result in their complete and final salvation was on the knees of the gods.

Returning to the cavern, they caught up the spears of the Negritos, and carried them and the plank to their customary quarters at the farther end. Of the Chinese prisoners, only Wing Wu and his cousin had enough spirit left to interest themselves in the extraordinary incidents of the past few minutes: the others had scarcely stirred in their sleep.

"Lie down, my lad," said Beresford, kindly, as Wing Wu came to meet him, his eyes gleaming with a light not seen in them for many a day. "You will want all your strength. You shall know all about it presently."

As he spoke he reeled against Forrester, who caught him in his arms and lowered him gently to the floor.

"Decidedly groggy," he murmured with a haggard smile. "I'm sorry to be such a nuisance to you, old man. Give me a minute or two; then—by George, I shall talk!"

He closed his eyes, and lay for awhile silent on his back, his panting nostrils telling how great had been the tax upon his weakened frame. By and by he looked up at Forrester, reclining near him.

"Thank Heaven my brain is clear!" he began. "What an absurd thing one's body

is! Now, they'll either rebuild the bridge and storm us, or do nothing and starve us out. It depends on whether the Old Man can bear the thought of extinguishing us without using the Eye. Either way we are doomed—unless we get out. That's as much as to say that we must get out at once. We must! And we must let our friends above know when to expect us. Scribble a note to Mackenzie, then; we pop out of the chimney to-morrow night."

"Is it possible?" Forrester asked.

"You will manage it. If I am not mistaken, a few hours' work with the iron will pierce through to the surface. Only take the greatest care."

"And what then?"

"There you have me! I haven't an idea. But I am inclined to think that you canny, close Scot is ready for us, and has his plan of campaign thoroughly mapped out. I trust him the more because he has told us nothing. Well, you mount first—I'm afraid that's inevitable——"

"Of course——"

"I follow when you give the word, and I think our two young Chinese friends here will be men enough to join us. We make four: Mackenzie will have Jackson and your *shikari*, I suppose; you know nothing of the fate of your other man, you say?"

"No. I hope he is up there, too."

"And my plucky little Tibetan—I'd be glad to think he might make one of us. But this is all guesswork: we can only be sure of six or seven. Obviously six or seven can't tackle two or three hundred well-fed Chinamen and a few score Negritos. Mackenzie must have discovered the way down into the rift, and means us to slip away in the dark. Guesswork again! Let us leave all that. Take a good sleep: then tighten your belt, and ply that bit of iron to bore our passage. Please the powers, we'll worm our way into God's air before twenty-four hours are up."

With no means of telling the time, Forrester slept brokenly, and was at work long before the day had dawned above. To guard against danger from the falling earth, he got the young Chinamen to demolish the sentry-box, and lay the bamboo rods in gridiron fashion across the covering of the pit. Then, mounting into the shaft, he prised out the clay bit by bit, and afterwards the crumbling earth above it, making the hole to the shape of a narrow cone.

As the work progressed, the sound of running water grew more and more distinct. Forrester knew that if the bed of the stream were pierced there would be a swift end to their tribulations. He could only hope for the best and persevere.

How long he worked he never knew; so engrossed was he that he did not remember he had had no food. There was no sign of interruption. Beresford remained on guard in the outer cavern, listening for the footsteps of the Old Man's minions, the ministers of the Law of the Eye. But not a sound was heard in the direction of the lake. It seemed that the Old Man was content to bide his time.

It was a blissful moment when Forrester, thrusting the iron upwards into the earth, felt suddenly that there was no resistance. When he withdrew it, a thin slit of white light appeared at the apex of the cone. He had pierced the surface, and a great joy thrilled him, for he knew that he had not touched the stream. But he was instantly aware of a double danger. The hole, small as it was, might be seen. Even if it were not seen, a chance passer-by might tread upon it and break through. Would Fortune, he wondered, stand their friend? Nothing more, at any rate, could be risked while daylight lasted.

He descended, and hurried to give Beresford the great news. Beresford pressed his hand.

"To-night!" he said. "Now for these lads here."

Quietly, as though telling a tale, he informed the two young Chinamen of the bare fact that a way had been opened for them to the upper world.

"Will you join us?" he asked. "There are friends above. What may lie before us we cannot tell: we may have to fight for our lives. Will you take the risks?"

Wing Wu assented eagerly: free from the domination of the priests he was a new man. His cousin was less ready; on being shown the ladder, and the crossbars rising one above another until they almost disappeared, he shook his head, declaring that he had no strength for the feat demanded. The others forbore to urge him.

"He will try when he sees the rest of us go up," Beresford remarked confidently. "Our plan is fixed. You mount first; at your signal we follow. You and I will take the Negritos' spears. The only other weapons are the iron bar and the knife. Wing Wu can take the bar, the other man the knife. We wait only for darkness."

The period of waiting was trying to them all. Time after time Forrester went into the inner cavern, and peered up the perpendicular shaft at the tiny streak of light. The elder

Chinaman, dull-eyed and listless, merely wailed for food.

The two Negritos paced restlessly about the larger cavern, looking again and again through the entrance towards the farther end of the ledge, now silent and deserted. More than once Forrester went to the cleft to see whether his last message had been drawn up; but the bone remained where he had lain it. This added tenfold to their anxiety, for without the co-operation of their friends they would be like men lost in a wilderness. The shaft, indeed, penetrated to the open air, not to a roofed chamber; but at what spot, whether in an unenclosed field, or in a walled garden or courtyard, they had no means of telling. Without a guide, they might as well be in Minos' labyrinth. One consideration, however, prevailed over all others: to remain below was to starve; above ground, they could at least die fighting.

At last it seemed to Forrester that the streak above was becoming fainter. He stared up the shaft until convinced beyond doubt that the shades of evening were falling. Quickly the light faded; all was dark.

He rushed to the cavern to tell Beresford, then hurried back, mounted through the shaft, and with his spear slightly enlarged the hole. The gurgle of water struck more loudly upon his ear. A footfall startled him, and he held his hand in sickening dread that the fatal discovery was made. The sound passed and died away, but the scare made him defer further work until later, when he might suppose the enemy were sound asleep.

When every minute seemed an hour, it was impossible to gauge the flight of time. But, all allowances being made for their impatience, Beresford judged that three or four hours had passed before he suggested that it was now safe to resume operations. Once more Forrester scraped away at the hole. The glimmer of stars lent him encouragement and hope. Inch by inch the earth fell away; he pushed his hand through; at last, in quivering suspense, his head. He drew in great gulps of the sweet air, that was like champagne to him after the noisome atmosphere below. And with eager eyes, little above the level of the ground, he looked about him.

It was very dark; only a faint shine from the stars thinned the blackness. Almost at once he became aware that while the view before him was unobstructed, it was shut out behind by a mound of earth. From beyond it he heard the slow wash of the stream, and he gasped with thankfulness that his tool had escaped the channel, apparently by inches.

Nothing was in sight but the dark shapes of bushes, arbours, and the pile of buildings beyond. He was holding himself rigid, listening for sounds, wondering what he must do, when a slight, slow hiss struck upon his ear. Was it merely the rustle of the breeze? It came again. His message had not been received; no friend would be awaiting him; if the sound were human, could it proceed from anyone but an enemy?

He waited, watchful, scarcely breathing. Then he started, for, a few yards away, at the base of the embankment, a dark shape was stirring. Instinctively he tightened his clutch upon the spear, though he knew that with only his head above ground he could do nothing to defend himself. His one precaution was to sink down until only his eyes and scalp were above the surface. He could not yet distinguish whether the form was that of an animal or of a man. It lifted itself, became gradually erect, and moved very slowly, almost imperceptibly, towards him. Then he began to recognise something familiar and friendly in the shape; he raised his head a little; a rush of hot blood made him dizzy, and he almost swooned with unspeakable joy and thankfulness when he heard a whisper in old Mac's well-known voice.

"Dick!"

"Be careful!" Forrester murmured anxiously. "Don't come too near. Your weight may break through."

"Now, quick! How many do you muster?"

"Beresford and two Chinamen. There are others—helpless."

"So! Bring up the able-bodied, and make for yon summer-house: you see?—a yard or two away. Wait for me there."

Mackenzie crept silently away: he never wasted words. Not till afterwards did Forrester learn how the patient Scotsman had prowled about the grounds nightly in order to guard against the contingency that had actually happened—the sudden appearance of the prisoners above ground. Hamid Gul had accidentally dropped the string down the grating when trying to tie it to a bar, and, having no more to spare, could neither send nor receive a message.

Forrester withdrew his head, and set to work to enlarge the hole for the passage of his shoulders. It was an unexpectedly slow process. He dared not hack vigorously for fear of bringing a mass of earth tumbling in upon him, or of piercing the embankment and letting

down a deluge. But he picked away patiently until the gap was large enough to scramble through.

Then he gave the long-awaited word, and heaved himself to the surface. In spite of his care, a chunk of earth broke from the edge and fell down the shaft, breaking and scattering on the bamboos laid across the slab. Beresford waited a moment or two; then he mounted without accident, and after him Wing Wu. The three men crowded near the hole, waiting for Chung Tong to appear. It seemed that he would never come. Time was flying; the dawn could not be far off. Presently they heard an ascending scale of sighs as the Chinaman, pricked by fear of loneliness to follow them, climbed the bars one by one, each upward move accompanied with a sigh. When his head emerged, Forrester and Beresford caught his shoulders, and heaved him through, not without disturbing clods that fell with ominous thuds, just audible, on the screen.

Forrester led the way stealthily to the summer-house indicated by Mackenzie. There Mackenzie and Jackson, with Hamid Gul, were awaiting them. For a few moments speechless greetings passed between the reunited friends; their hearts were full; feeling was too intense to find expression in word. When Mackenzie at last spoke, there was an unusual huskiness in his tones.

"Come now, listen, all of you. We are in a garden; there's a seven-foot wall around it. Over the wall is a larger enclosure. That's where the buildings are. Dick, you and I are going through Hamid's quarters and the kitchen into the pagoda. We are going to collar the Eye!"

A thrill shook them all.

"Hamid knows where it is. If we canna do it, we capture the Old Man, and hold him as a hostage. There's a sentry in the antechamber leading to his apartments. There's another at the principal outer door, which opens to the enclosure yonder. They're likely fast asleep. We'll no meddle with the man at the principal door. The other—we'll have to deal with him. If there's an alarm, the rest of ye just bolt for yon door, and do your best to hold it against the priests. If the sentry has gone inside, one or two of ye follow him up. You've got arms of a sort; you can change 'em for the two-three things we've brought if you like 'em better. It's touch and go, ye ken. We must be swift and sure. We canna fight hundreds; but with yon Old Man's Eye in our possession, we can defy him and his priests too. Bob, you'll be in charge here, and this gentleman—Mr Beresford, I presume—will likely give you every assistance."

"You may be sure of that," said Beresford.

"Well, that's all. We'll shed our boots. Then, Hamid, lead the way."

Mackenzie took a hoe from a bench; Hamid was armed with a kitchen chopper. They went out, followed by Forrester with his spear. Stealthily crossing the garden, they scaled the wall, dropped lightly on to the grass, and crept across to the door of Hamid's quarters. From this they passed into the kitchen, and thence into the passage.

At the farther end was a door on which was a huge lock. But, as Hamid had noticed on his daily visits to the inner apartments, the lock had long since fallen into disrepair, and been replaced by a simple latch worked from the inside—eloquent testimony to the fear inspired by the Eye. The point of Forrester's spear, passed through the space between the door and the sidepost, sufficed to raise the latch. Mackenzie cautiously pushed the door open, not without a slight creaking, and signed to Hamid to lead the way.

The cook, nerved by the presence of the sahibs, led them into a corridor dimly lit by small Oriental lamps. On bare feet they stole along by the wall towards the door at the farther end. A man was squatting there, with knees up and head downbent. Mackenzie drew from his pocket a woollen pad—it had been borrowed from his blanket—and two or three short pieces of cord. These he handed to Forrester with a significant look. Then, stealing forward in advance of Hamid, he crept up to the dozing sentry, and with a sudden swoop clutched him round the throat before he had time to utter a sound. Forrester, just behind, stooped and thrust the gag into his gaping jaws. They turned him face downwards, and a few rapid twists of the cords left him trussed like a fowl at the doorway.

Stepping over him, they pushed the door gently. Mackenzie peeped round its edge. The antechamber within was empty. Through this they tip-toed. The door at the farther end yielded to their touch, and they passed into a second antechamber, lit by more lamps than the first. A slight but prolonged creak as the door opened came near to being their undoing, for thirty feet ahead, at the entrance to the Old Man's apartment, sat a second sentry, a priest, whom Mackenzie had not allowed for; and the sound roused him from his slumber. He rose lazily, without any sign of alarm,

expecting vaguely, perhaps, that his comrade without was coming to pass an hour with him. But Mackenzie realised that nothing but extreme quickness could save the situation, and, even as he darted forward to tackle the man, the latter let out a loud shout of alarm. It was his first and last cry. Mackenzie drove at him with the full strength of muscles hardened by weeks of spade work, and he fell like a log.

Meanwhile Hamid, with Forrester close at hand, had run on into the inner chamber—the sanctum in which the Old Man of the Mountain slept, ate, and meditated on the Law of the Eye. Like all old men, he was a light sleeper. His functionary's cry had awakened him, and as the two men burst in, they saw his thin, wizened, almost ghoulish frame half risen from his golden couch. The lamplight fell upon his blazing eyes, wide with wonder, resentment, and, when he caught sight of Forrester, fury. Hamid shrank before his paralysing glare, retaining enough presence of mind, however, to lift his trembling arm and point to the golden lattice behind which the fantastic head-dress reposed in its recess, illuminated by its own special lamp.

The Old Man observed the movement. His expression changed; it might have been said that terror spoke for the nonce from that cold, mask-like countenance. With agility amazing in so decrepit a figure, he leapt from his couch and darted towards the sacred recess. But Forrester was too quick for him. He sprang to the wall, turned his back so as to cover the lattice completely, and raised his spear to meet the expected attack.

For one moment the Old Man glared upon him with eyes that cut like knives. Then, with a sudden swift movement that took him utterly by surprise, the Old Man almost leapt towards a richly gilded hanging that covered the adjacent wall. Forrester wrenched open the lattice, seized the head-dress to make sure of it, and, oblivious for the moment that his incautious handling of it might shiver him to dust, hurried after the retreating figure. The hanging swung aside, closing immediately behind the Chinaman. Forrester heard a slight click, and when he drew the curtain aside, was confronted with nothing but a bare wainscoting of panelled wood. The Old Man was gone.

With amazing agility the Old Man darted towards the sacred recess, but Forrester sprang forward with spear raised.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FIGHT IN THE PAGODA

"PUT the thing down! Put it down!" cried Mackenzie, rushing in and seeing the head-dress in Forrester's hands.

"But——"

"Yes, I know; but put it down! Any

moment the Eye may open! Be careful now! Ah!"

He heaved a sigh of relief as Forrester set the head-dress down on the golden table.

"Where is the Old Man?" he continued.

"He went through there," Forrester answered, indicating the spot.

"A secret door! Well, we'll waste no time seeking that. Let him bide. We must discover how he works the Eye."

"What did you do with the priest?"

"Tied him up with his own girdle. I don't think we made noise enough to waken anybody else. Hamid, just run along to the kitchen and look up the door."

"And bring me something to eat, if you can," Forrester added. "I'm famished; have had nothing for more than twenty-four hours—none of us has."

"Och, that's bad! You can't work on an empty stomach. Fetch here all you can, Hamid, and be quick about it. Now, man, we'll turn the Eye towards yon gold lattice; it won't destroy gold. Keep behind it in case of accident. If we can only find out how the thing works we have the whole caboodle at our mercy."

Standing over the head-dress, they began to examine it, at first with their eyes alone. Then Mackenzie ventured to pass his fingers around its base, feeling gently for the spring or secret button by which he supposed the shutter or eyelid of the Eye was opened. Gradually working upwards, in the course of a few minutes he had left no portion of it untouched except the Eye itself, which he was careful always to avoid.

"How the dickens does the thing work?" he said at length, thrusting his hands into his pockets and contemplating it with a puzzled frown. "We'll not find out without taking it to pieces, to my thinking."

"Does it matter?" asked Forrester. "The main thing is that we've got it, and the Old Man hasn't. Besides, those fellows outside will be getting anxious. Where is Sher Jang, by the by?"

"In his hut. I wished I could bring him, but he shares the hut with three others, and I didn't dare fetch him out by night in case they smelt a rat and followed him. The fewer the better, to begin with."

"I say, it's nearly morning. Look!"

A faint light was creeping in at the windows high in the wall. Time had passed more quickly than they had been aware. Soon the Old Man's menials would come to extinguish the lamps, and the priests would issue from their dwellings and go about the work of the day.

"What now?" Forrester asked.

"We must get our men inside, fasten the door, and hunt about for the way below. If we once get away with the Eye, we can come back any time and release all the prisoners."

"We can't leave those poor wretches in the cavern to starve. Ah! Listen!"

From somewhere outside came the harsh clangour of a gong.

"The signal to get up!" said Mackenzie. "There's no time to lose. With or without the Eye, we must act. Yon little door leads to the entrance, no doubt. You had better bide here and watch over the head-dress. You might also try to discover how the Old Man gets from here to the judgment seat below. There must be a stairway somewhere. I'll go along to the front and bring in the others."

"What if the Old Man comes back, or any of his priests?"

"Och, show them the Eye! That'll be enough, I doubt. You've got your spear, too. I'll bring our men here as quickly as possible, and we'll barricade ourselves, and get a breathing space to find the way out. Send Hamid after me."

He hurried through the door at the end of the room, opposite to that by which he had entered. It opened into a vast central hall. Ranged along the sides were a number of curiously carved chairs, richly ornamented with gold. The walls were decorated—or rather, perhaps, disfigured—with inlaid figures of the monster. Half-way down the hall, on the left, was an immense golden throne, like that in the underground temple. Nobody was in sight. An arch at the farther end led to a broad aisle and the great central door. A priest was in the act of throwing the door open. In the half darkness, with his eye fixed on the priest, Mackenzie failed to notice a couple of steps between the hall and the entrance lobby. He slipped, and, though he recovered himself instantly, the noise was sufficient to attract the priest's attention, and he turned round. The sight of a white man rushing towards him, hoe in hand, from the direction of the inner sanctum seemed to paralyse him for a moment. Then he wheeled about, and fled with flying skirts through the open door, shouting as he went.

Mackenzie sprinted hard in pursuit, not from any particular wish to catch him, but anxious about the little party waiting in the summer-house. When he issued from the door he saw the priest running towards a wicket-

gate in the wall of the garden. Before he reached it, it was opened from the inner side by a priest of the second order. The running man dashed through, shouting to his colleague as he passed. The latter looked up, saw Mackenzie within a few yards, and, turning on his heel, fled away at full speed, leaving the door open and the key in the lock. In a few moments both the priests had rushed across the bridge, and disappeared through the open wicket on the farther side.

Mackenzie made straight for the summer-house.

"Come!" he cried, seeing Jackson peeping round the door. "The whole lot of you! Through yon gate!"

The four dashed out, Jackson leading. Chung Tong moved more slowly than the rest. Mackenzie caught him by the neck, and shoved him along. He paused to shut and lock the gate, then herded the party across the court-yard into the main entrance of the pagoda. When all were inside, he flung the door to, locked and barred it, and said:—

"Now, Mr. Beresford, I'll ask you to keep guard here. You're hungry, I know; I'll send you something to eat. The rest of us are just going to find the way to the rift. You don't object?"

"I'm at your orders," answered Beresford. "Forrester is safe?"

"He was, three minutes ago. I'm away!"

The thought of Forrester inadvertently opening the Eye urged him through the hall at the speed of a greyhound. Jackson and Wing Wu followed him; Chung Tong dropped into one of the golden seats that lined the entrance lobby, and groaned.

In the Old Man's apartment Forrester was eating a kind of patty which Hamid had just brought on a well-laden tray from the kitchen.

"Take some food to Mr. Beresford at the door—some water, too," cried Mackenzie. "All quiet, Dick?"

"Yes. I can't find out how——"

"Dinna fash yersel' with it, man," Mackenzie interposed. At moments of excitement he was apt to relapse into his native idiom. "Bob, and you, mister, take a keek all round for the way below stairs. I'm away to the kitchen. Eat as you go."

He rushed off, anxious to see whether Hamid had secured the back entrance.

"Hech! the fathead!" he exclaimed, when he saw that the cook had merely barred the door. He looked around for material for an effective barricade. In a recess near the stove lay a number of logs of wood. Dragging them out, he jammed them between the door and the opposite wall of the narrow passage.

"That will give them some work," he thought.

Then he rushed back to his friends. Forrester was still feverishly trying to discover how the Eye worked. Jackson was absent. Wing Wu, still munching a patty, had just returned from a rapid run through the building.

"Well?" cried Mackenzie.

"Sir, I cannot find either doors or stair-cases," said the Chinaman.

"Any men?"

"None but the two priests on the floor."

"That's well. Hullo, Bob!"

Jackson was staggering in under a load of arms. The call to action had made a very different man of him.

"By jinks!" cried Mackenzie. "Where did you find 'em?"

"In a little room beyond. There's a crowd of things of all sorts—pikes, swords, a small armoury."

"A jolly good find!" cried Mackenzie. "But you haven't got our rifles!"

"No, I didn't see them. There's no ammunition for these ancient muskets, but they'll come in useful, perhaps, as clubs."

"No doubt about that," said Forrester, looking up from the head-dress. "It sounds like coming to a fight, Mac."

From without came the dull hubbub of distant voices. It was clear that the whole community was roused. The windows were too high in the wall for any of the party to see what was going on outside, but the increasing noise told that the priests had left their lodgings, and Mackenzie guessed that they were massed in the garden beyond the locked gate. They could know nothing of what had happened within the pagoda. No doubt they were bewildered and alarmed, wondering why the foreigners who had dared to profane the sacred floors of the August and Venerable had not instantly been shattered to dust by the omnipotent Eye.

"Will they scale the wall and attack us?" asked Jackson.

"Maybe, when they discover that we're in possession," said Mackenzie. "But at present you may be sure they're just bewildered. They won't know what to do until they get word of the Old Man. What's happened to him?"

At this moment a fierce howl of fury penetrated the walls.

"What's up?" exclaimed Forrester. "Get on my back, Mac, and look out of the window." Mackenzie mounted. The noise had swelled to a pandemoniac babel.

"The whole gang of them are in the garden yonder," he said. "They're looking up towards the roof, yelling like fiends; I never saw such rage on such ugly faces. I'll run to the door and see what maddens them."

A minute later he emerged quietly into the courtyard, hidden from the priests by the intervening garden wall. Hastening to a spot where the whole upper portion of the pagoda was in view, he gazed up. The roof was built in three great tiers, one above another. From the second to the third a winding stair led to the summit, upon which there was a small square platform, fenced with a balustrade of ornamental gold-work. The bent form of a frail old man was painfully climbing the last few steps. Mackenzie watched him. He gained the top, leant for a moment on the balustrade to rest, then stood with hands uplifted, looking in the distance like a quaint figure carved in ivory. His bald scalp had no protection; his wizened features were twisted in agony and despair. And there the Old Man remained mute and motionless, gazing down upon the upturned faces of his two hundred priests.

Mackenzie slipped back. As he was relocking the door, Beresford said, quietly:—

"I'm not a panic-monger; but do you know that if those yelling shavelings out yonder break through our hole, in a couple of seconds we shall all be blown sky-high?"

"Good heavens above!" ejaculated Mackenzie, aghast. "And we can't prevent 'em!"

"Only by warning them. I speak Chinese; I will go out and tell them."

"You'd never get the chance. They'd tear you limb from limb before you'd got a word out. But I tell you. There's a fellow here. Come away!"

He hurried Beresford through the hall and the Old Man's room to the door, outside which the bound priest still lay.

"Tell yon Chinky," he said. "Then I'll kick him out."

Beresford very gravely explained to the shuddering Chinaman what the result of an incautious step would be, and advised him to set a guard over the hole. Then the man was bundled out, and the door again made fast.

Mackenzie told what he had seen.

Was the Old Man urging them to fight?" asked Forrester.

"No, he's done! Not a kick in him, seemingly. Without the Eye he's just a poor wee body. What they'll do I cannot tell; but we'll have another look for the stairway in the meantime."

Leaving Forrester still wrestling with the problem of the Eye, Mackenzie and Jackson ranged through the building from end to end in search of doors in the walls, or trap-doors in the floors. After several fruitless minutes they were returning to the sanctum, and suddenly became aware that the noise outside had subsided.

"What's that mean?" cried Jackson.

The words had scarcely left his lips when the great door at the end of the aisle resounded under a loud and violent knocking.

"It means war, I doubt," Mackenzie answered. "Go and join Mr. Beresford, Bob. I'll bring the others with some of those arms you discovered. We must keep the Chinkies out at all costs."

He raced back to the inner room. Forrester had already left the head-dress, and seized an ancient pike.

"No, no, Dick!" cried Mackenzie. "Stick to your job, man. I'm no good at puzzles myself. We will need that Eye. Hamid, you and your chopper away to the kitchen door! I doubt they won't come that way because the passage is narrow. If they do, make a bit use o' your chopper, then run and tell me. Away wi' ye! You, mister"—addressing Wing Wu—"lift yon musket, or a scimitar, or whatever ye like best, and come. Forget all about the priests and their conjuring tricks. You've got an arm; then fight like the de'il."

While speaking he had clutched an armful of weapons, and led the way back to the great door, with Wing Wu close at heel. Like Jackson, the young Chinaman was a new man now that he was no longer subject to the baneful influence of the priests.

"Here, take your pick," Mackenzie cried, on reaching the others, displaying the weapons. "By good luck the door's thick; it will stand a fair amount of battering. Mister, can't you get yon friend of yours to take a hand?"

He pointed to Chung Tong, who had roused himself to work steadily through the eatables brough by Hamid Gul. Wing Wu spoke to him, urging, imploring him to choose his weapon; but he turned a dull eye, and munched on.

"Give me a lift, Mac," said Jackson. "I'll see what they're doing."

On Mackenzie's shoulders he looked through a window.

"The garden is swarming with them," he said. "They're hoisting one another over the wall. They're armed with all sorts of things—picks, rakes, hammers, swords, knives; some seem to have bars of gold! They're all making for the door."

"Are they avoiding our hole?" Beresford asked, anxiously.

"Yes; there are two men standing over it, warning off the others as they run by."

"What did you mean about an explosion, sir?" Mackenzie asked Beresford.

"There's a pit in the cavern. Out of it come rays like those from the Eye. They decompose water; what you sent down nearly made an end of us. A greater quantity would have shivered the whole place to atoms."

Mackenzie drew a long breath.

"They know it, thank goodness!" he said. "Anything new, Bob?"

"No; they're still running this way. There must be some near the door I can't see. They all look as if they're expecting something to happen."

The last words were drowned by an explosion that shook the building.

"Gunpowder! The door!" cried Mackenzie.

Jackson sprang down. They were all far enough from the door to be out of danger. There were cracks in the timber, but it still held together. A howl of wrath rose from hundreds of throats outside.

"They'll try to burst in," said Mackenzie. "I'll take the left, you the centre, Bob; Mr. Beresford the right. Mister Chinaman," he added, with a grim smile, "will act as reserve."

They placed themselves, awaiting the assault. Some minutes passed. Outside there was confused and fitful shouting. Then all at once the door creaked under a heavy blow.

"A battering-ram!" cried Jackson.

"Ay! Stand clear!"

The blow was repeated again and again. Splinters and slabs of wood fell inward, and at every successive breach a yell of triumph ascended. Without firearms the defenders could do nothing to check the destruction. At last the remnants of the door crashed in, and the assailants in a serried mass crowded the entrance.

The full light of the morning was behind them; the defenders had some slight advantage in the dimness of the aisle, lit only by a few narrow windows high up in the outer wall. It soon became clear, too, that the priests were not accustomed to the use of weapons. For generations, no doubt, the servants of the Eye had relied on it as their sufficient defence. But they were Chinamen, infuriate, reckless; their ferocity made up for their lack of skill, and as they came on with strident yells, wielding whatever weapons they had been able to snatch up, the Englishmen recognised that they had need of all their strength, experience, and resource to stem the human torrent.

Mackenzie had a heavy musket, Jackson an antique sword, Beresford a pike—unfamiliar weapons, all of them. But there was no space for the display of science, even if they had had it. The Chinamen dealt in smashing blows and sweeping cuts. In grim silence the white men parried, thrust, jabbed, smote to such purpose that in a few minutes a barrier of prone figures was heaped up between them and their howling foes. And all the time, unknown to them, their reserve was strengthened. At the first sight of the priests all listlessness fell from Chung Tong. He sprang up, seized a sword, and stood beside his cousin, glaring at his oppressors, and only waiting an opportunity to wreak on them the vengeance long stored in his brooding soul.

For the first few minutes the defenders held their own. There was a slackening in the attack; the bolder spirits in the van had fallen, and barred the way against their comrades behind. But as the ranks thinned slightly two or three carrying muskets pushed their way from the rear, and thrusting the barrels between the men before them, fired haphazard into the aisle. Mackenzie uttered a cry, reeled, and had not recovered himself when one of the priests with a yell of fiendish joy lunged at him with a pike. In the nick of time Jackson threw himself forward, struck the weapon up with his sword, and gave the Chinaman the point.

Wing Wu seized the chance. He leapt to the spot Jackson had vacated, and brought the butt of his musket down on the skulls of the enemy with a vigour that Mackenzie himself might have envied. Chung Tong could no longer remain idle. Slipping in between his cousin and Beresford he laid about him with amazing fury. The assailants fell back, the men who had fired withdrew to reload; and the defenders, thankful for a breathing space, tried to gather their flagging energies to meet an assault which they felt would tax them to the uttermost, and in all probability would overwhelm them.

Meanwhile, in the inner sanctum Forrester had been trying with feverish impatience to

Suddenly Forrester appeared before the attacking priests, who stared at the head-dress in speechless stupefaction, then flung themselves prostrate on the floor.

discover the secret of the Eye. At the sound of the explosion he could scarcely refrain from rushing to the door; the din and clash of fighting made him tingle; he almost snatched up the weapon nearest to hand and hurried to share the risk and the strife. But he knew how much depended in the last resort on the Eye; his sense of discipline was strong, and having tacitly accepted Mackenzie's leadership he checked his impulse, and bent all his energies upon the baffling problem.

When, however, he heard the shots his endurance gave out. Smothering a cry, he placed the head-dress on the table, seized a sword, and was on the point of rushing out towards the scene of action. But in a flash of thought he remembered the Old Man, who might be lurking within the panelled wall, ready to spring out and seize his precious instrument. To leave it unguarded would be madness. There was a moment's hesitation, then Forrester lifted the head-dress, rammed it carefully but firmly down upon his head, and, thus covered, sped towards the great door, sword in hand.

He dashed through the arch into the aisle at the moment when the priests were swarming again to the attack. As he reached the upper step to encourage his hard-pressed friends he let forth a great shout that rose high above the cries of the enemy. Placed somewhat above them, he was in full view. The leading priests glanced towards him. They recoiled, stared for an instant in speechless stupefaction, then with one consent cast down their weapons, and flung themselves prostrate on the floor.

CHAPTER XX

BURSTING THE BONDS

IT was Beresford that was quickest to profit by the instinctive act of veneration inspired by the sight of the head dress which use and superstition had made a symbol of awful authority and power. Stepping forward he spoke in slow, grave tones over the heads of the grovelling multitude.

"The Law of the Eye must be obeyed," he said, in Chinese. "It changes not from age to age. As its minister, I bid you withdraw on your faces from the portal which you have polluted. You shall not stand upon your feet until you reach the wall yonder. Then you shall hear the judgment of the Master of the Eye."

The priests began in silence to crawl back towards the garden wall. Mackenzie and Jackson, after a few moments of breathless suspense, smiled wanly at each other. Forrester, meanwhile, realising with amazement the wonderful effect produced on the crowd by the mere sight of the head-dress, had at once checked his pace, and now moved down the aisle with all the dignity he could muster, and stood motionless in the doorway, in full view of the priests. When they rose to their feet and saw him there a shiver shot through them.

"We must carry it through," Beresford murmured hurriedly. "Say two or three words slowly, and in a loud tone, and extend your hand towards them."

"*Arma virumque cano*," said Forrester, reflecting rapidly that, while some of the priests might understand English, Latin would probably be unknown to them.

Beresford bowed to the ground. Then, lifting himself, he spoke in Chinese.

"Hear the decree of the Master of the Eye: The slaves shall depart from this place, with provisions, arms, and gold sufficient to carry them to their homes. The Master of the Eye and we, his servants, will accompany them. If any man of you molests our party or seeks to stay our progress, he shall suffer the last punishment."

The priests heard his words in silence. Their eyes were fastened immovably on the august head-dress.

"I must go down to the cavern and bring up the wretches there," said Beresford in a rapid undertone.

"Wait! Wait! It's not safe!" cried Mackenzie, holding his wounded arm. "Send them all back to their houses first."

"He's right!" said Forrester. "Who knows but some of them will go for you in a frenzy?"

Beresford calmly gave the order, Mackenzie flung them the key of the wicket-gate, and they slowly passed through it, crossed the garden and the bridges, and retired into their dwellings on the farther side.

Forrester heaved a great sigh of relief.

"The blessed thing won't work!" he said. "If they only knew it!"

"They don't! Your appearance was a stroke of genius," said Beresford.

"Not even a lucky fluke," said Forrester. "I put the thing on to keep it safe. It's plaguey heavy; may I take it off now, do you think?"

"Surely, for a few minutes at any rate—out of their sight. We must decide rapidly on the next step."

They withdrew a few paces into the aisle, leaving the two Chinamen to keep watch on

the priests. Jackson, meanwhile, did his best to bind up Mackenzie's wounded shoulder. Forrester put the head-dress on the ledge of the golden throne, and, linking arms with Beresford, walked slowly towards the doorway.

"Have you found the way down?" asked Beresford.

"No. There's no sign of doorway or staircase, is there, Mac?"

"None whatever."

"Then we must make the priests tell us," Beresford went on. "When I have got the prisoners from below we must tell the slaves. I fancy by the noise that they are already in a great state of excitement beyond the wall. We'll send them down first, and bring up the rear. One of the priests will have to guide us to the rift, of course."

"And the Negritos?"

"They can go, too, if they choose. But I fancy that, as the aboriginal inhabitants of the plateau, they won't care to migrate."

"The Old Man?"

"Ah! What shall we do with him? We might fetch him down, I suppose, if we can find his secret door, and take him with us, though I don't know in the least what country would have the right and privilege to punish him as he deserves. On the whole I think we had better let him alone, report the whole matter when we get back, and leave the nations to squabble among themselves about the ownership of this valuable region. But what on earth's the matter?"

They heard frenzied shouts from the direction of the sanctum. In a few moments Hamid Gul came into view, running like a deer, and screaming "Hai, hai!" at the top of his voice. The Englishmen turned to meet him.

"By Jinks! He's got our rifles!" cried Forrester in delight.

"But his cries sound more like fright than jubilation," said Beresford, puzzled.

"Well?" Forrester asked, as the Bengali rushed up panting, and thrust a rifle into his hand.

"One-armed bald-head, sahib!" he gasped. "Hai! My lungs and liver! With rifles in arms, lucky find in cupboard, I come through old gentleman's bedroom. Sight I saw knocked me silly, sahib. One-armed josser lost all his hair; bald as basin, went slap-bang into wall, sahib."

"Wen Shih?"

"Identical and no mistake, sahib, though hardly knew him without wig. And he had in hands old gentleman's funny old——"

"What?" broke in Forrester with a shout, glancing towards the spot where he had laid the head-dress. It was gone! Behind the throne a panel stood open in the wall.

"He's got it! He's taken it to the Old Man! We're dished!" cried Forrester.

Instinctively he took a few rapid paces towards the sanctum. But he remembered in a flash that he had been unable to find the door in the wall. He started back, in his agitation not knowing for the moment what to do for the best. Then suddenly his eyes fell on the rifle Hamid Gul had thrust into his hands. With a rapid jerk he threw open the chamber. It was full of cartridges, just as when he last had it in the rift.

His friends stared in amazement as he ran to the door, leapt over the fallen priests, and rushed into the courtyard. They followed him to the entrance. He was looking up into the air. On the far side of the enclosure the priests had emerged from their houses, and were standing in silence, gazing intently upwards. When Forrester reached the wall he turned about, set the rifle to his shoulder, took steady aim and fired. A dead silence followed the reverberations of the shot; then a yell of rage burst from the throng of priests, and they came leaping in one tumultuous mob towards the garden. At the same time, far to the left, a dark, bearded figure jumped down from the top of the wall, and rushed straight towards Forrester, spade in hand.

Forrester stood for a few seconds steadily gazing up, and the spectators in the portal saw his face pale, and a strange look in his eyes. Then he shivered as though a blast of icy wind had struck upon him, and ran staggeringly back to the doorway. A moment behind him Sher Jang dashed into the pagoda.

"I hit him!" Forrester said under his breath, in the hushed tone of one who has witnessed a tragedy. "He was carrying the head-dress up the stairway to the Old Man. He rolled from roof to roof, and plunged down—down—he and the head-dress, into the rift."

He sank into one of the seats, and stared at the floor.

"Quick, you men!" cried Beresford, taking instant grip of the situation. "The rifles! The Chinamen are at us!"

"Have you got our revolvers, Hamid?" asked Mackenzie.

"They are there, sahib. I could not carry—"

"Away with you! Don't stand blethering there! Fetch them, and run like the wind!"

The priests were swarming across the garden, jostling one another in the narrow gate, leaping towards the pagoda. Infuriated at the loss of their colleague, just promoted to the higher rank, they knew that the "foreign devils" no longer had the Eye at their command, and already gloated over their slaughtered bodies. Venting shrill cries of frenzy, they made straight for the entrance, reckless and without order.

But their vision of an orgy of carnage was rudely dispelled. Within the doorway Beresford, Jackson, and Sher Jang stood calmly awaiting them, rifle at shoulder. At twenty paces the rifles flashed: three men fell upon their faces; their comrades reeled back. Another volley crashed into the crowd surging on, and as the survivors staggered, the bark of the revolvers placed by Hamid in the hands of Forrester and Mackenzie mingled with the groans and shrieks of the frantic mob. They turned about, flung away their futile weapons, and fled, a wild rout, through the gate and over the garden towards their dwellings.

"After them!" cried Mackenzie. "No more firing!"

The little garrison stepped out into the open, And there Sher Jang put his fingers to his lips and blew a shrill blast. Instantly the long wall to the left was thick with men, who scrambled over, dropped to the ground, and pursued the panting priests, brandishing the implements of their servitude, and filling the air with triumphant yells. The *shikari*, at the first sounds of commotion, had collected his fellow slaves, and led them to the wall to await his signal.

They swarmed after their oppressors. The passion for freedom throbbed in their veins. The pent-up fury of years of abject captivity burst the fetters that chained their souls. No hireling valour could withstand them. The priests, their rage become terror, fled like stags before the hounds, across the bridges, through the stream, towards the farther gate and their barracks beyond. The huddled mass choked the gate; a few turned at bay; some fell on their knees and prayed for mercy: they had shown no mercy, none they received. The slaves smote and spared not. They forced their way through the gate, hunted the priests to their doors, dashed in after them like terriers into a warren; drove them out at the rear, and chased them pell-mell across the plateau, while the Old Man still stood like a graven image on his gold-fenced platform aloft.

The white men withdrew into the pagoda They had neither the power nor the will to interfere between the priests and their late victims.

"We may be thankful we are not all blown up," said Beresford, as they threw themselves wearily upon the golden chairs "I was in terror lest they should break through into the cavern. One priest put his foot into the hole, and fell sprawling over the embankment into the stream. But now our way is clear."

They all turned and looked at the opening in the wall behind the throne.

"Wen Shih has opened the door for us," said Forrester. "He must have come up from below and run off with the head-dress when our backs were turned."

"The irony of fate," said Beresford. "Now we will bring up the poor creatures still below, and make preparations to depart."

CHAPTER XXI

DOOM

IT was a strange procession that filed, some hours later, through the rift towards the thundering falls. Sher Jang led the way, rifle on shoulder; the position suited his dignity, and Forrester in giving it to him had been moved by a desire to separate him as far as possible from Hamid Gul. That worthy had again "sung his own praises quite a lot," and boasted so much of the part he had played in recent events that the *shikari* found him more offensive than ever.

Behind the leader marched the old *zamindar* with his daughter, and the whole body of slaves—Chinese, Tibetans, Indians of all castes and none. They were light-hearted, even merry; the reaction from black despair was extreme. Every man bore his load. Many had stinted their supply of food to cumber themselves the more heavily with gold; for in the final sack of the pagoda they had seized upon every golden article that was portable.

At the rear came the Englishmen with Hamid Gul and Beresford's sturdy little Tibetan, whom they had found in one of the underground cells, despairing about his master, but wholly uncowed by the green eye. The two servants carried their master's possessions, discovered in one of the cupboards behind the armoury, and three articles on which Beresford set much store. One was the tablet that had led him and Redfern to the spot. The second was a roll of parchment giving the Old Man's pedigree: apparently he was the last of a line which had

held unbroken sway for many centuries. The third was a similar roll, less ancient, inscribed with the names of the Chinese prisoners who had been employed, during a period of eighty years, in transmuting the lead into gold. At the head of the list was a short statement which Beresford could not fully decipher; but from which he inferred that eighty years before a certain mandarin of Yunnan, having scented out a secret in these wilds, had organised an expedition to discover it, come into conflict with the father and predecessor of the present owner, and slain him in fight. The attack had been beaten off, and the Old Man had taken implacable revenge by kidnapping or otherwise impressing young members of every branch of the mandarin's family.

The white men had decided in consultation to take the whole crowd back to Dibrugarh, lay all the facts before the Government, and leave it to determine the future. Hitherto the district had been a No Man's Land; when it became known that it concealed a manufactory of gold, no doubt there would be eager competition for its ownership. The breaking-up of the remnant community of priests was only a question of time.

Towards the close of the day the procession reached the forest village in which Forrester's party had left their carriers. One of the liberated slaves acting as interpreter, it was learnt that the Nagas, tired of waiting for their employers, and convinced that they had fallen victims to the mysterious Eye, had gone away about a week before.

"I wonder if they ventured into Dibrugarh?" said Forrester.

"It's not likely," Mackenzie answered. "They've no interest in us, and, as they've taken our baggage, they'll appropriate that in lieu of pay."

"I hope Redfern recovered," said Jackson.

"I've grave fears about that," said Beresford. "It is more than a month since we parted, and if he were well he would have sent up a relief force long before this. Poor old Runnymede!"

"He didn't know we came, of course," said Mackenzie. "Maybe we were asses not to tell somebody. They all think we are holiday making."

"And I'm ready for a holiday now," cried Jackson.

"A bath and a change of togs would be enough for the moment," said Forrester. "I've never been tempted to compare Dibrugarh to heaven before. We can't leave these people to wander without guidance, or I'd vote for pushing on faster to-morrow. I long to smell soap again!"

By dint of hard marching they made more rapid progress next day. In the afternoon, emerging from a tract of forest land, they recognised at some distance the well-remembered contours of the hill which Redfern had named Camel's Hump. They had set their course towards its base, when a glint of light on the hill-top attracted their attention.

"Nobody heliographing, surely?" exclaimed Forrester.

"There's somebody up there, though," cried Jackson. "Don't you see figures moving?"

They halted, and gazing ahead made out several small moving objects on the skyline. Every now and then there was a flash, reflected from the rays of the declining sun.

"Would you not say that's a tent?" asked Mackenzie, presently, when they had moved a little nearer. He indicated a conical object on the crest of the hill.

"A tent it is!" answered Forrester. "And, by jinks, they've seen us! They're mounting horses! They're galloping down!"

The distance was still too great for the forms of the riders to be clearly distinguished, and as a measure of precaution the Englishmen called a general halt, and placed themselves, with those of their followers who had firearms, in the van. They watched the horsemen steadily, and in growing excitement. Pith helmets, the khaki dress, the very manner of their riding bred conviction.

"The Assam Light Horse!" Jackson declared.

He waved his arms and cheered frantically. His companions took up the cry, and a faint response came from the galloping horsemen.

"There's old Jenkins!" cried Forrester, presently, recognising a comrade.

"And McIlwaine!" Mackenzie chimed in.

"And Paddy!" from Jackson.

"And, on my life, dear old Runnymede himself!" shouted Beresford. "I knew he wouldn't fail us!"

He started forward impetuously, the others following. The horsemen dashed down, reined up their steeds, and sprang to the ground. There was laughing and handshaking, a confused and deafening exchange of welcomes, protests, demands for explanation.

"You old frauds!"

"Dashed unfair!"

"You've had all the fun!"

"Why didn't you give us all the chance, then?"

"A pretty set of scarecrows, by Jove!"

Redfern and Beresford clasped hands in silence awhile.

"You're thinner, Harry," said Redfern.

"You're not looking very fit yourself," answered Beresford. "Had a shake, old man?"

"Rotten! You're quite sound, eh?"

"Yes, thank Heaven! There's a heap to tell you. What were you doing on the hill?"

"Camping for the night. We were coming on to-morrow. Glad we're too late, old chump!"

Presently, when all had cooled down, they fell to talking practically. It was near sunset, and they decided that Forrester and his party should mount the hill and share the planters' quarters for the night, the mingled mass of Orientals camping at the foot.

An hour later, gathered about the camp fire, the band of bronzed and stalwart young Englishmen listened raptly to the story told by Beresford. He related all the incidents of the weeks since Redfern was parted from him by the iron shutter. The silence of the audience was broken now and again by exclamations of horror, rage, sheer amazement. Forrester, Mackenzie, and Jackson each added some detail of his own experience.

"And the villainous Old Man?' cried one.

"We left him standing like an ivory statue on his platform, surveying the wreck of his little empire," said Beresford.

"And the Eye—what became of it?"

"We don't know," Forrester answered. "None of us had the heart to look for the body of the poor wretch. I suppose the Eye opened. If it did, it is boring a hole somewhere in the rift."

"I vote we go on to-morrow, and wipe out the whole rascally crew," said another.

"And chuck the Old Man into his pit."

"He's too tough and skinny to please the monster."

"But, I say. What about that gold-making concern? Why shouldn't we make ourselves millionaires?"

"I wouldn't go down there again if I came out Rockefeller and Vanderbilt rolled into one," said Forrester. "I can't imagine now how I climbed that chimney shaft. When I was near the top, and heard the water gurgling overhead——"

"Well, what of that?"

Before Forrester could reply, the darkening sky was lit up northward by a sudden blaze of light that brought everyone to his feet in consternation. As one of them afterwards remarked, it was like the blinding glare of ten thousand flashlights. It was gone in an instant, and the universe seemed plunged into utter blackness.

The men stood at gaze. Perhaps a minute and a half after the flash, a roar like the gunfire of all the world's fleets rolled and thundered about them. The earth trembled beneath their feet. The air became hot, and a shower of fine dust mingled with stones bespattered them.

"A volcano!" cried one.

"No; that is the answer to your question," said Beresford, quietly.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"What we feared might happen has happened. I haven't a doubt of it. Our mining must have weakened the embankment, the stream broke through and plunged into the pit, tons of water were decomposed by the mysterious rays, and the explosion has shattered everything with volcanic force."

"Aye, and there's the end of the Old Man of the Mountain," Mackenzie said, gravely.

The workers in the Laibach Observatory recorded a seismic disturbance, locating it somewhere in the steppes of Central Asia. No authentic information, accredited by responsible men of science, ever reached them. But in course of time fantastic stories came to this country in private correspondence, and found their way into the newspapers. They were pooh-poohed, laughed at, pronounced incredible. Certain adventurous spirits did indeed slip off with more or less secrecy, and hurried by the quickest route to the unknown country watered by the middle Brahmaputra. Persistent explorers ranged over mile upon mile of desolate country in quest of a gigantic waterfall, a marvellous cañon, and a fertile plateau which was said to be inhabited by an aboriginal race of pigmies; but their discoveries were meagre.

In his room at Cambridge, Henry Beresford sometimes shows his visitors a painted tablet from Khotan, and some strangely inscribed rolls of parchment. If pressed, he will tell a singular story, which they listen to politely, and with murmurs of "How very interesting!" totally disbelieve. The fact is that neither he, nor his friend Captain Redfern, nor certain young planters in Assam care very much to talk about those few weeks when the currents of their lives were mingled, and danger welded them into a comradeship which nothing will sever

THE END

In spite of the gale, he worked his way out to the end of the pole, and then lowered the rope to the exhausted bathers. "Jeff!" he cried, "slip that under Dick's arms, and tell him to climb his hardest when we pull."

Over the Brink

The Story of an Exciting Holiday Adventure.

By H. D. SOUTHARD

Illustrated by W. E. Wigfull

OLD sailors who are familiar with the waters never attempt to round Swinton Head from east to west when a stiff western breeze is blowing. If necessity compels them to reach the Cove by water, they start a couple of miles beyond the Head, and row straight out an equal distance from the land. There they have only the waves to fight in rowing parallel with the shore, but it is necessary to go well beyond the Cove before heading for the beach, and then to row like mad, the boat taking a diagonal course to the left despite the utmost efforts of the strongest oarsman, while a weak stroke would find himself hurled against the rocky point.

And yet, in quiet weather, there is no sign of current there, which comes only with the west wind. As a result, novices and strangers are often deceived, and occasionally the outcome is a tragedy.

Jack Howard knew the region well, for he was a Swintonian by birth. One blazing summer day, in company with a girl friend who was staying with her

people at the same boarding-house, he walked out to the Head, and stood for a moment with his companion at the edge of the grove of pines that crowns the hill top. Howard was carrying a small axe, a trowel, and a sack, for he wished to get some briar-roots from a clearing close by.

Miss Vernon had a pair of field-glasses swung from her shoulder, and before they entered the wood she raised them to her eyes and swept the water from side to side, looking longest at a point directly off the Cove.

"Why," she suddenly cried, "I can see someone—yes, there are two heads—right out there beyond the bathing raft! They must be a mile from the beach. You take the glasses and see if you can recognise them."

Jack Howard smiled, and waved the glasses aside. "I can tell you off-hand who they are," he said; "it isn't necessary to use the glasses, for no one but your brother Jeff and Dick Hammond would think of swimming out so far. Besides, don't you remember all the other boys drove to Pike Castle this afternoon?"

"Yes, it is Jeff; and that's their canoe tied to the raft. Do you think it is safe for them to swim out so far?"

"Why, not absolutely, for cramp might overcome anyone at any time, but the water is warm at the surface, and both are strong swimmers. They're all right!"

"I'm glad mother isn't here," said the girl. "She always worries about Jeff; and if she saw him out there, she would get a boatman, somehow, and go after him. It annoys him; but he doesn't dare be so venturesome when mother is about."

"Oh, well, I've explained to them all about the waters round here. They won't stay out there very much longer; and we must hurry, too, for there'll be a good old storm before long."

They turned away from the bluff and entered the wood, where Jack soon got busy at his task, while his companion helped him as much as she could. As they worked and chatted they forgot the swimmers; and more than an hour passed before Jack was satisfied with the result of his endeavours.

Meanwhile the boughs above them began to sway and a sibilant music filled the upper air, for the wind was rising steadily as the sun declined. In the shelter of the wood the air was still warm, but even there the rapid fall in the temperature was perceptible.

"We had better go down to the lower road and return home that way," Jack suggested. "It is some distance farther, but by this time you couldn't walk along the bluff in any comfort, for the wind there would almost sweep you off your feet."

"I want to see whether the boys have gone ashore yet or not," said Ethel Vernon. "I had quite forgotten them, when I ought to have kept them in mind."

Again the young man smiled. "What could you have done if you had?" he asked.

"I could have got a boat and rowed out there, if they persisted in staying," she said, shaking her head with an assumption of firmness. "Don't you know I am kind of responsible for them while they're here on their holidays?"

As they emerged from the wood the gale nearly took their breaths away; but Ethel braced herself and unslung her glasses. With his unaided eyes, Jack could see that the waves were breaking over the anchored raft till they almost threatened to tear it away, and that the canoe was gone. Undoubtedly, he decided, the two boys were safe ashore.

"I can't see anything of them," said the girl; and then added, with a sigh: "But, of course, I couldn't if they had been drowned."

"Oh, they're safe and sound at home. You stand here, and I'll go to the point, where I can see the Cove, to make sure."

He placed the sack and axe upon the sward, and walked across the open stretch to a clump of elms that clung to the brink of the rocky precipice. There she saw him pause and look carelessly to left and right. Then he seemed suddenly to stiffen to rigid attention, as he caught hold of a branch to steady himself, and look searchingly down to the troubled waters to the left of the Head. Instinctively she ran forward, partly in terror lest he should fall, but more because her fancy pictured something alarming that he must have seen.

When she reached him her first act was to clutch the back of his fluttering jacket, before she peered over his shoulder in the direction he was looking.

"Oh!" she gasped; and for an instant closed her eyes.

Close under the windward side of the Head, with their canoe pointed towards the Cove, were the two boys. They were fast in the grip of the Swinton current, against which anything less powerful than a propeller-wheel would have been helpless. Furiously though they paddled they lost way at every stroke.

Howard made a trumpet of his free hand and shouted with all his might: "Pull out! Get outside the current—quick!"

He was calling against the wind, and his words seemed to be whirled back over his shoulder as they left his lips. Again and again he shouted. He could almost have pitched a pebble into the little craft, but above the roar of wind and wave he was helpless in his efforts to make himself heard.

By this time, however, the boys themselves fully realised the futility of their efforts. Merely holding the canoe's bow towards the wind, they let it drift. As it was about to be dashed against the rocks near the end of the point, first one and then the other sprang overboard in quick succession. As they disappeared in the seething water, Ethel again closed her eyes; and when she opened them nothing was to be seen except the wreck of the canoe beating violently against the base of the cliff.

"They've got on the ledge," cried Howard. "Jeff crawled on and then dragged Dick after him. I saw them."

"Then they're safe?"

"Oh, they can't drown now."

"But how are they going to get up here?"

This was a question that Jack did not know how to answer. "We've got to help them up somehow," he finally replied.

"How far up can they climb?"

"Not half way." He had to shout to make her hear, for the uproar drowned ordinary conversation. "You see, there are a series of ledges across the end of the Head for about fifty feet above the water. Then the rock bulges, and is afterwards almost vertical and without a seam. There's quite sixty feet that nobody could climb without a rope."

Ethel shuddered at a sudden thrust of the gale. "It's getting colder every minute," she cried, "and they're wet and haven't anything on but their bathing costumes. They'll perish from the cold, even if they don't get so exhausted that they slip from the ledge!"

Jack made no reply to this, seeming to be in a brown study. His reticence irritated the girl, who asked: "Hadn't I better run to the boarding-house for help?"

He shook his head. "There's no one there but an old man and four women; the boys won't be back till long after dark." Then he turned away and continued to look up and down the slope and across towards the grove, till she felt furiously angry at him.

She wheeled indignantly about, grasped a branch and leaned far forward, to peer over the brink; but he caught her by the shoulder and drew her back, almost roughly. "You can't see them," he said. "They're under that jut directly below us; you'll only risk a fall by leaning over that way."

"But what can we do?" Her eyes flashed through the tears that filled them. "We must do something, at once!"

It was no time for smiling, but the corners of his mouth twitched. "I think I've got an idea," he said; "come on!"

He drew her across to a more sheltered niche in the edge of the wood, seizing the axe on the way, and then broke into a run. Midway between the trees and the end of the promontory stood a flag-pole, fitted with halyards and pulleys, from which on summer holidays a large flag was displayed. The pole was nearly a hundred feet in height, and perhaps ten inches in diameter at the butt.

Jack vigorously attacked this pole with his axe, sending large chips flying, though the seasoned wood offered considerable resistance to the light blade. Ethel could only watch his efforts, but the sight of his activity in a measure restrained her impatience. In a quarter of an hour the pole fell, going with the wind, away from the bluff.

"Now you may take hold and help me swing it about," Howard called. "If I can get this to extend a little way beyond the bulge," he explained, as they reversed the pole by carrying the smaller end down hill in a half circle, "I can get out to where I can see them and make them see me. Then it will be possible to do something. So far, you know, they have no idea that anyone knows anything about the scrape they're in."

"But you surely don't mean to crawl out over the water on that little pole, in this gale?"

Jack made no direct reply. "We'll have to work this along the top first, towards the edge of the cliff," he said. "It's hard work, but I know you'd rather work than sit idle; and it won't take long—the slope favours us."

Without further protest or comment, she aided him with all the strength that she possessed. In ten minutes they had a dozen feet of the pole thrust over the edge of the precipice, at a point a little to the west of the extreme end of the Head. Howard seemed satisfied with the situation.

"That wheel pulley at the top is good and strong," he told her, as he unlashed and separated the line, leaving one end free. "I wish this rope was a size larger, but anyhow it's tough enough. We can spare six or eight feet of it."

He cut off a length, and lashed the butt

of the pole as firmly as possible to a tree, after which he began to remove his shoes.

"You're really not going to be foolhardy enough to climb out on that pole?" she exclaimed.

"Why, there's not the least danger. I've been out on the boom of the *Jeanette* when it was thrashing about in a wind twice as high as this; besides, I'm not a bit nervous, and that's half the battle. But I rely upon you. You must sit on the pole there, and see that this end of the rope doesn't slide through this pulley. Bring it up sharp with a hitch—like this—so that we can use it to draw them up when the time comes."

Flinging her a reassuring smile, he ran to the edge of the cliff, where he got astride the pole, and rapidly began to work himself outward.

That the task was not a new one to him he showed by his skill in performing it. Leaning forward against the gale and maintaining his balance with seeming ease, he slid forward a foot at a time till he came to a halt about a yard short of the upper pulley. There he peered downwards for a moment, and what he saw seemed to afford him satisfaction.

Taking the free end of the rope, he formed a loop and lowered it. The cord caught against the rock, but despite the wind, he shook it free, and it slipped below the bulge.

"Jeff," Ethel heard him call, "slip that under Dick's arms, and tell him to climb his hardest while we pull! Understand?"

The reply from below was inaudible; but in a moment Howard glanced over his shoulder. "Hold steady, Miss Vernon!" he shouted. "Take up the slack, and keep the rope always taut when I pull!"

The pole weaved and bent under the added strain upon it, but its material was sound and resilient. Ethel pulled her hardest to help, for she could see the veins stand out on Howard's neck from the tremendous effort he was making, and she feared for his safety, for he could not easily maintain his balance and exert all his strength at the same time.

After a couple of minutes the strain was relaxed. "He's sitting on top of the bulge, resting," Jack called to her. "He has hurt one of his shoulders. We'll have to pull him straight up from there; he can't be of much help."

"Now!" he shouted a moment later, and the terrible work was resumed. Ethel's breath was coming in gasps, when Dick's head appeared, and Jack reached down and grasped him.

She was left to hold the empty rope while the two worked their way back; but when they reached the edge of the bank she took the risk of jumping from the pole and helping to lift Dick over to safety.

Howard was panting, but seemed in the highest spirits. "With Dick to help pull—he's got one sound arm—we'll have Jeff up in a jiffy," he said. "Go back and sit on that butt, Miss Vernon. I don't like the way it bobs about now."

The "jiffy" proved fully ten minutes long, for all were tired, and Jeff, though uninjured, was chilled to the bone; but at the end of that time he was helped over the brink.

"Now we'll all run for home," said Howard. "There's nothing like a sprint to ward off pneumonia. You fellows have got off lightly—even though," he added, with a smile, "there'll be the dickens of a row when they learn what we've done to their jolly old flag-staff!"

Can You Solve These Picture Puzzles?

FIRST PRIZE VALUE FIVE POUNDS

A Camera, a Football, a Hockey Stick, and Many Other Fine Prizes will also be awarded

Each of the sixteen pictures below represents the name of a well-known town. Can you tell which towns these are? Some of them you will probably solve at once, but several are likely to puzzle you considerably.

Goods to the value of five pounds, chosen by yourself, will be sent to you if you solve more of them than any other Captainite; while, if you are less successful, you may still win one of the other fine awards named above. This competition is open to all readers under eighteen years of age.

For the *Rules and Conditions*, which should be read carefully and strictly followed, see the Old Fag's Editorial on the next page.

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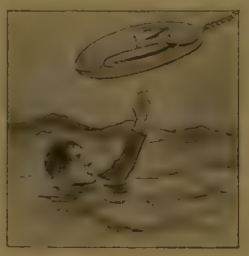
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SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, LONDON

Our Picture Puzzle Competition. For some little while past quite a feature of my post-bag has been the persistent inquiries for a picture puzzle competition. All forms of competitions have a certain vogue for awhile, then the fashion changes, and we hear no more of them. Where, for instance, are the Limericks of yesteryear? Who cares now that once upon a time "there was once a young boatman named Jolly," or who would agitate themselves to find a witty finale to the unfinished four-lined story of that or any other episode in that young gentleman's peculiar career. Fashions in competitions change, but picture puzzles seem the exception to the rule. They are always popular and always welcome, and I think there is very good reason that this should be so. The time spent in worrying out the puzzles is a long way from being wasted, for, besides the fun of the thing, the mental exercise occasioned is, I would not mind hazarding, every bit as beneficial as many more prosaic methods of inducing brain-expansion. In attempting to solve the puzzles that are shown on the opposite page, you will find that your powers of deduction will need to be exercised to the full, and though I am not accustomed to underrate the cleverness of Captainites, I should not advise any intending competitor to refrain from sending his list of solutions merely because one or two of the problems have baffled him. Quite possibly no Captainite will be successful in solving all the puzzles.

The winner will be allowed to select five pounds' worth of goods from the catalogue of any firm whose advertisements appear in this magazine. He can choose anything he likes, from a bicycle to five golden sovereigns' worth of toffee. I do not see how I can possibly make the principal award more attractive than that, for there is surely not one reader among the many thousands who subscribe to this magazine who could not spend a very pleasant quarter of an hour deciding how the five pounds could be spent to the best of his personal advantage. So if you would like to be the fellow who is to enjoy the aforementioned fifteen minutes, to say nothing of the constant delights of ownership of the goods he ultimately selects, just do your best now to find out what towns—which, by the way, are not all British—are represented by the pictures on the opposite page.

The following rules must be very carefully observed.—It is surprising how often competitors nullify their efforts through sheer carelessness. The Competition Fag tells me that time and again he is compelled to disqualify entries because the senders have not conformed to the most simple of conditions. In a recent competition a paper was received that ran the winning entry very close indeed in point of merit; but the space reserved for the name and address was left blank! Rules are not made for amusement, but to facilitate adjudication and to provide against any possibility of dispute or error. These are the very simple rules of this competition:—

1. Do *not* tear out the opposite page,

but write your solutions beneath each other and in numbered order on a sheet of paper, giving your name, address, and *age* at the top.

2. This competition is open to all readers up to the age of seventeen inclusive. Provided you are under eighteen on September 18th next, you are entitled to compete.

3. Each attempt must be accompanied by the Competition Coupon to be found on the Prize Page (see page 6).

4. All entries must be received not later than Friday, September 18th, addressed to the Picture Puzzle Editor, THE CAPTAIN, 8 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.

5. The first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose list contains the greatest number of correct solutions. In the event of a tie, age may be taken into consideration, or the value of the prize may be divided at the Editor's discretion.

6. The Editor's decision must be accepted as final, and your entry implies the acceptance of this clause.

Two new Serials begin next month, when THE CAPTAIN starts upon its thirty-second volume. Mr. Hylton Cleaver by his many splendid short stories has so firmly secured the admiration of Captainites that the news that he is the author of the new school serial will be very cordially received. He is making Harley as famous a school as Warren Bell made Greyhouse, and P. G. Wodehouse Wrykyn. It is scarcely two years since first I made Hylton Cleaver's acquaintance, yet in that short time the Old Pauline has established himself as one of the very best writers of school stories in the land. The charm of Hylton Cleaver's yarns lies in their freshness of humour, and in plot and treatment he avoids the hackneyed with an adroitness that is as refreshing as it is unusual. I'm not going to say anything about

"Who Cares?"

which is the title I have given to the serial which commences next month, because if I did I should be tempted to write so much that I should give away the plot of the yarn. And I want you to approach the tale with a perfectly open mind, and enjoy it all the more for that. It is a great story. When you have read it I know, without doubt, that you will confirm my verdict.

G. H. Heslop, of the Lancing College eleven, who finishes the season with an aggregate of 981 runs (including four centuries), and an average of 89.

"Flamehair the Skald" is the title of the other serial, and, as you probably guess, it deals with the times of the Vikings—glorious times when worlds were to conquer and adventures were not far to seek. Only a master hand could adequately depict the scenes of those brave days, and that master hand has been discovered in Mr. H. Bedford Jones, a Canadian author still on the sunny side of thirty, who has not yet won on this side of the Atlantic the recognition he deserves. In Canada, Mr. Bedford Jones' name is a household word, and well it might be, for he has a dozen fine books to his credit. It is my privilege to introduce him and his work to CAPTAIN readers, and no author has ever made his *début* with a more vigorous story than you will find "Flamehair" to be.

Writing about his story Mr. Bedford Jones says:—

"The story of King Harald Hardrede of Norway is one of the least-known of all the old Viking tales, but it best displays the rugged courage and daring which led those Viking wanderers across the world.

"Most of the characters in my tale are historical. That of Flamehair is not, nor are one or two others, such as one Svein Arnison; in other respects I have followed the sagas closely, save as regards the scene of Svein Arnison's death. As for the scenes in Byzantium, the revolt of the Varangars, as well as the capture of the Emperor, are well vouched for by the sagaman, Snorri.

"Harald's life was even more wild than that of Olaf Tryggvison. Fighting at his

King-brother's side as a boy, exiled to Russia at fifteen, in command of ships and armies under Jarisleif, then speeding down to Byzantium, becoming Acolyth of the Emperor's guard, leading cruises in the Mediterranean and conquering the Holy Land—finally to sweep up to a throne and die, as he had lived, at the head of his men, and disdaining to seek shelter! Blots on his character there may have been, but Harald Hardrede was a man, and a great one! And it may be that Flamehair the Skald, despite his youth, shared in no small measure that greatness—although on this point the saga is silent."

The saga of old may be silent, but you will find that Mr. Bedford Jones shows Flamehair to be a hero of heroes, a man after your own heart. You will follow him in scores of adventures, on sea, on land, a captive, and a freeman. Flamehair is to the fore all the time, and well it is for King Harald that he has this trusty Saxon at hand, this youth so insensible to peril, and so diligent in great deeds. The story throbs with excitement, and Mr. T. Heath Robinson, who was specially commissioned to illustrate it, has taken full advantage of the many opportunities offered for stirring and romantic pictures.

I have to congratulate Tiffin's School, Kingston, on winning our Rowing Cup at Molesey Regatta. They thoroughly deserved their success, the outcome of swallowing previous disappointments in sportsmanlike spirit, and sticking manfully to their determination to annex the trophy. It is rather curious that in the five years' history of the race the Cup has never reposed in the same school for more than one year, the victorious schools being King's Worcester, Imperial Service College, Beaumont College, Kingston Grammar School, and now Tiffin's. The winning crew was S. H. Hewitt (bow), A. E. Edwards, W. H. Austin, E. C. Popple (stroke); and in the Kingston Grammar School boat were C. R. Brennock (bow), E. R. Winser, A. R. Carruthers, C. A. Cole (stroke), and N. Carter (cox).

The Ashburton Shield has again been won by a school which has never previously held it, the honour this year going to Sedbergh, with a score of 496. Eton, Harrow, and Edinburgh Academy each scored 490; but as the Eton team had the best figures at the long range—500 yards—they gained the bronze medals, and Harrow the small bronze medals awarded for third place. Other scores were as follows: Lancing, 488; Wellingborough, 484; Winchester, 484; Merchant Taylors, 483; Tonbridge, 481; Repton, 481; Dulwich, 479; Wellington, 479; Radley, 479; Bradfield, 478; Clifton, 478; St. Lawrence, 477; Sherborne, 477; The Leys, 477; Rugby, 476; Victoria (Jersey), 474; Charterhouse, 474; George Watson's, 474; Oundle, 473; Reading, 471; Denstone, 470; Dover, 469; Fettes, 467; Merchiston Castle, 467; Cranleigh, 467; Felsted, 466; Glenalmond, 465; Uppingham, 465; St. Paul's, 462; Malvern, 462; Marlborough, 462. The Spencer Cup,

Sedbergh School Shooting Team, winners of the Ashburton Shield at Bisley.

shot for by a representative from each of the teams competing for the Ashburton Shield, was won by Cadet Officer Baker of Sherborne, after a tie with Corporal W. A. Copeland of Felsted. The Cadets' Challenge Trophy, for two cadets from each school, was won by Lancing.

Answers to Correspondents

SCHOOL SPORTS RESULTS

ARMAGH ROYAL SCHOOL.—*Long Jump:* Bates, 19ft. 3ins. *High Jump:* Strong ii., 4ft. 10ins. 100 *Yards:* Tittle iii. *Quarter-mile:* Tittle iii. *Half-mile:* Irwin.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS SECONDARY SCHOOL.—*Long Jump:* A. E. Oldroyd, 18ft. 1in. *High Jump:* D. Whyte, 4ft. 7ins. 100 *Yards:* A. Ives, 11secs. *Quarter-mile:* A. E. Oldroyd, 60⅗secs.

GENERAL

E. H. B.—I am glad that your aquarium has been so successful. Here are the answers to your questions: (1) No fish can live comfortably in a round glass aquarium unless you take care to give them some shade. The best way will be to surround half the aquarium with green paper, or to paint the outside green. Three minnows will be enough for the size you mention. (2) Do not put any larger fish with them, or they may get eaten. Two quite small carp, without any minnows, would live well in your small aquarium. (3) If your plants break off, they must have been disturbed in some way. If they rot, they cannot have been properly rooted, or else decay was beginning when you put them in. As a rule, the trouble is that they grow too fast. You must be careful to remove all decaying matter. (4) If the snails hatch in the aquarium, the fish will probably eat them. The proper way is to hatch them in a separate aquarium, with plenty of weed, and then as soon as they are large enough to pick up with the finger and thumb they can be safely put with the fish. (5) Two large snails will be plenty for an aquarium of your size.

"Topidnu."—Eton and Harrow play two innings in their matches because, my dear lad, it is the rule of cricket that they should do so. That Harrow were ultimate losers though they led on the first knock is all the more credit to Eton, and not, as you infer, hard lines on Harrow, who were called upon to keep the advantage they had gained. The completion of one innings each is like half-time at football—you would scarcely wish for the side leading at the interval to be declared the winners, would you? One innings only is played in minor matches merely for time's sake.

J. M. (Biggleswade).—Sorry, but your sketch is not quite up to publication standard. We cannot return submitted contributions unless postage is enclosed.

D. W. (Oldham).—Thanks for your interesting letter. I cannot give you the address of a reader in the district you name, but there are sure to be plenty there. Why not write to the Club Captain and let him insert an announcement for you under "Correspondents Wanted"?

Ivoire.—Picture puzzle competitions are not new to THE CAPTAIN, but, as you will have seen, we are holding another this month. The subject you suggest, however, is hardly practicable, the scope being comparatively so limited that the task would be child's play to most Captainites.

R. R. S.—The result of the "Words Wanted" competition appears in the Captain Club pages this month.

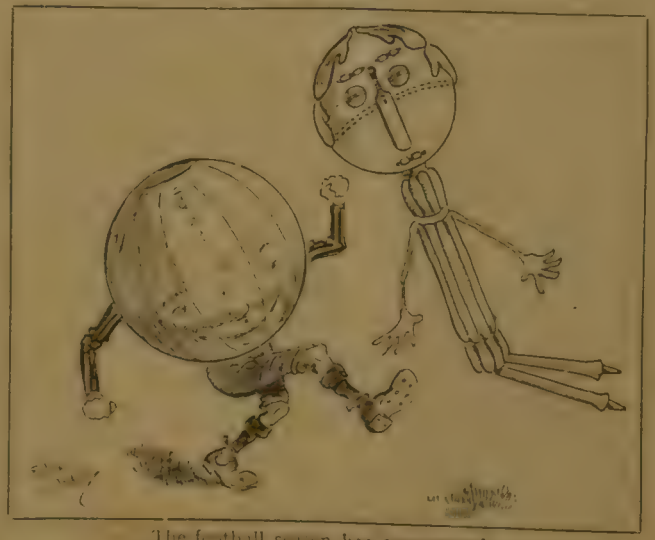
"Admirer."—We have supplied information concerning the Indian Police before, and cannot repeat it just yet. You can obtain particulars, with a syllabus of the examination subjects, from the Civil Service Commissioners, Burlington House, W.

"Wondering."—"Mike," by P. G. Wodehouse, consists of "Jackson Junior" and "The Lost Lambs," which appeared as serials in our seventeenth and nineteenth volumes. The other tale you mention did not run in THE CAPTAIN.

P. I. (Kilburn).—No, sir, I disagree with you. You would think little of a guest at your house who offered you 3s. for a print that was worth £5 10s., trading on your ignorance of its real value. His "perspicacity and acumen" would not save him from your contempt. Decency demands that he *gives* you his knowledge, and it is then your duty to acknowledge it in whatever way you think appropriate. A school is a place where boys are banded together in a common cause, and not for the purpose of besting one another. They are fellow-guests of one and same host. Any transaction in which one of the parties gains a considerable pecuniary advantage at the expense of the other is a breach of faith that no decent fellow would condone, and few boys, thank goodness, would attempt.

THE OLD FAG

THE KICK-OFF!



The football season has commenced.